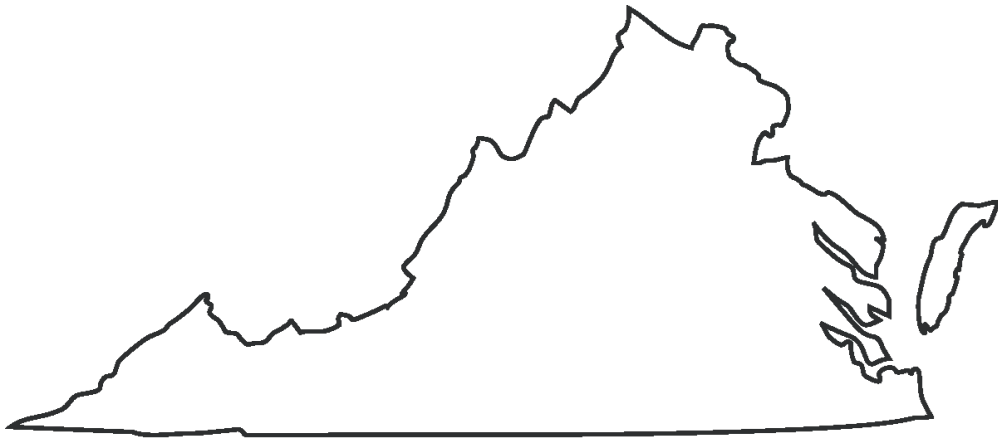




VIRGINIA COMBINED STATE PLAN DRAFT for Public Comment

VIRGINIA PYs 2024-2027



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Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are:

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined

State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are:

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) ¹
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
 - State Strategy Implementation,
 - State Operating Systems and Policies,
 - Assurances,
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.² States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

Paperwork Reduction Act: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the

completed plan to this address.

[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs. Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

This is a combined plan

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

Yes

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Yes

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Yes

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

Yes

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Yes

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

Yes

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Yes

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virginia envisions a state workforce system in which programs and resources are aligned to achieve the best possible results for Virginia's businesses and job seekers. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the ideal vehicle for the Commonwealth to implement that vision. This Combined State Plan (Plan) integrates workforce activities among core and non-core program partners, public and private workforce shareholders, and others in the Commonwealth who strive to achieve workforce outcomes that put customers first.

Guiding the Plan is Virginia's vision for the delivery of workforce development services:

Virginia's nation leading workforce ecosystem will equip Virginians with the skills they need and enable employers to attract, grow, and retain them – ensuring the future of a thriving Commonwealth. In parallel with the stand-up of Virginia Works, we will accelerate the coordination, enhancement, and future-readiness of the Commonwealth's many workforce programs and stakeholders across the government and broader ecosystem through a formal process.

Virginia embraces four strategic goals for the workforce system. These goals are:

1. Prepare Virginia's workers for current and future career pathways that provide competitive wages.
2. Deliver just-in-time workforce services that support business growth in Virginia's leading-edge economy.
3. Provide outreach and recruitment services that increase awareness and access to Virginia's workforce development ecosystem.
4. Reduce workforce system barriers through dynamic collaboration, coordination, and communication with Virginia Works as the hub-and-spoke model.

The core programs in the Plan include:

- The Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program authorized under Title I-B of WIOA and administered by Virginia Works (the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement)
- The Adult Education and Family Literacy program authorized under Title II of WIOA and administered by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
- The Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program authorized under Title III of WIOA and administered by Virginia Works
- The Vocational Rehabilitation programs authorized under Title IV of WIOA and administered by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)

To take a coordinated, forward-looking, and dynamic approach to fulfill the needs of Virginia employers and workforce, Virginia has established Virginia Works. This new state agency oversees the coordination and performance measurement of workforce development programs across the Commonwealth (both those within the agency and those which reside in other state agencies). With the agency established on July 1, 2023, Virginia is coordinating a truly cohesive hub-and-spoke ecosystem model for workforce development, with Virginia Works as its backbone. Additional information about Virginia Works is available at www.viriniaworks.gov

Additionally, non-core programs included in this Plan are:

- Career and technical education (CTE) programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 administered by VDOE
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers program administered by Virginia Works
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JMSG) program administered by Virginia Works

-
- Unemployment Insurance program administered by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)
 - Registered Apprenticeship (RA) administered by Virginia Works
 - Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP) administered by DARS

In addition, each of the organizations in Virginia delivering services to employers and job seekers is dedicated to increasing communication and efficiency, reducing duplication and waste, and achieving meaningful outcomes for all customers. For Virginia, this approach unifies the efforts of educators, career coaches, vocational rehabilitation professionals, economic developers, veterans' organizations, legislators and other elected officials, business leaders, and state government staff. This unity of purpose will benefit all customers by making the system easier to navigate and more relevant in today's rapidly changing job market.

This Plan is required by WIOA, which was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA authorizes four core programs in Virginia's workforce system, the state's one-stop system, and the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD).

Members of the Governor's staff, members of the Secretary of Labor's staff, workforce services partners, the VBWD, and the Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Public Policy (CPP) collaborated to develop the goals and strategies in this Plan. As part of this effort, CPP facilitated conversations with representatives from the Governor's office, Secretary's office, Virginia Works, VEC, VDOE, VDSS, DARS, DBVI, and regional workforce development leadership to identify strategies for implementing workforce development programs in Virginia for the next four years.

All partners collaborated throughout the fall and winter of 2023 and spring of 2024 to develop the 2024-2027 Combined State Plan based on stakeholder feedback, evaluation of the work completed since the 2022 Plan modification, and the expertise of the program partners.

II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

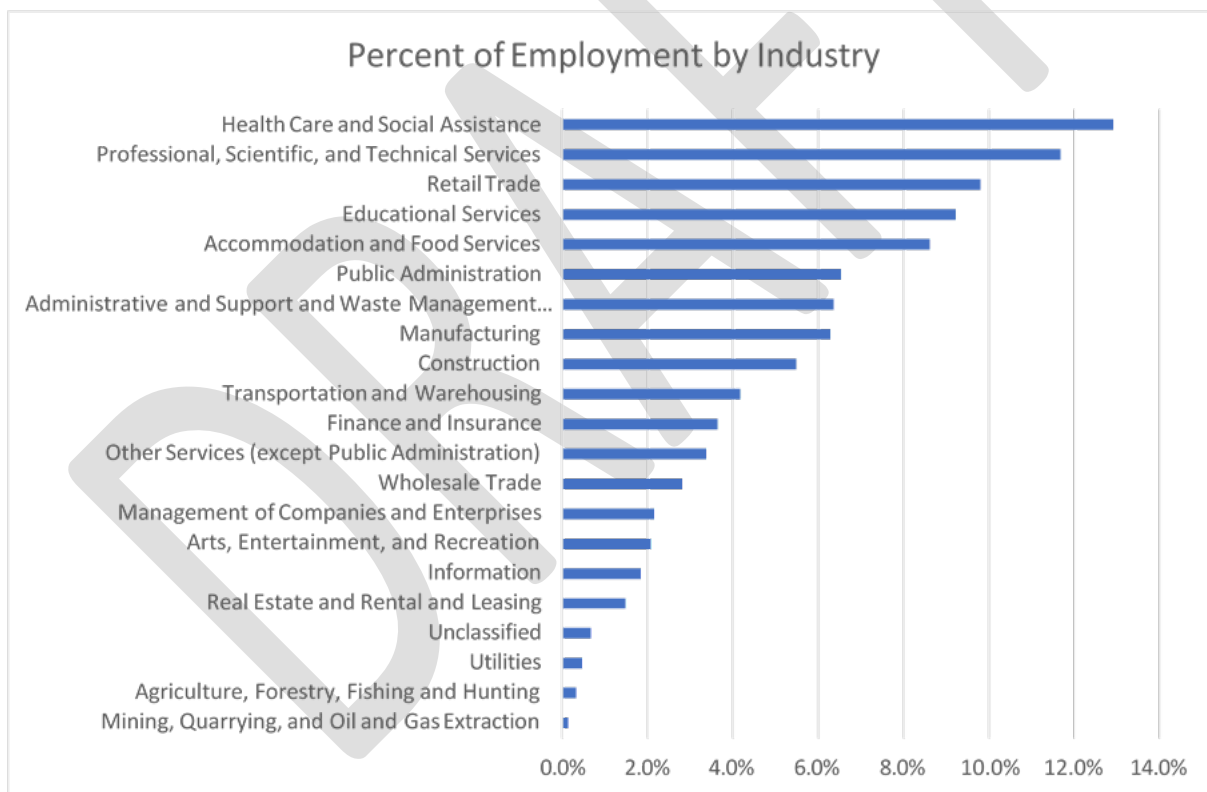
i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

Industrial Landscape

The main industries of employment for Virginia continue to be Health Care and Social Assistance; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Retail Trade; Educational Services; and Accommodation and Food Services, comprising 52% of all employment. On the other hand, the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting; Utilities; and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing industries exert the least influence on state employment, comprising only 2.4% of all employment, as seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1



Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry is the highest paying industry and the largest contributor to the statewide economy. It accounts for 17% of Virginia establishments (highest), 12% of employment (2nd highest), and a whopping 20% share of wages (highest). By contrast, Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services are the two lowest paying industries, and while comprising over 18% of all jobs, account for only 8% of statewide wages. Figure 2 shows this comparison between the share of employment and share of wages of each industry.

Figure 2

Industry	Share of Employment	Share of Total Wages	Difference
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11.7%	20.3%	8.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2.2%	4.2%	2.0%
Finance and Insurance	3.6%	5.6%	2.0%
Public Administration	6.5%	8.4%	1.9%
Information	1.8%	3.4%	1.5%
Wholesale Trade	2.8%	3.9%	1.1%
Utilities	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.5%	1.4%	-0.1%
Construction	5.5%	5.4%	-0.1%
Unclassified	0.7%	0.6%	-0.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.3%	0.2%	-0.1%
Manufacturing	6.3%	6.1%	-0.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	4.2%	3.7%	-0.5%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3.4%	2.7%	-0.7%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.1%	1.0%	-1.1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6.4%	5.3%	-1.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12.9%	11.5%	-1.5%
Educational Services	9.2%	7.1%	-2.2%
Retail Trade	9.8%	5.2%	-4.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	8.6%	3.2%	-5.4%

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

In terms of the number of establishments by industry statewide, Figure 3 below highlights the growing number of establishments in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and Manufacturing industries, compared to the number of Unclassified, Retail Trade, and Other Services establishments that are shrinking.

Figure 3

Industry	2022 Share of Establishments	2023 Share of Establishment	Change
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	16.5%	17.4%	0.9%
Manufacturing	2.6%	2.7%	0.2%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	5.4%	5.5%	0.1%
Public Administration	1.5%	1.6%	0.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3.9%	4.0%	0.1%
Information	2.0%	2.0%	0.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.8%	0.9%	0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%
Educational Services	1.5%	1.6%	0.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	2.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Construction	7.4%	7.5%	0.0%
Utilities	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Finance and Insurance	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	6.1%	6.1%	0.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	16.1%	16.0%	0.0%
Wholesale Trade	3.7%	3.6%	0.0%
Retail Trade	8.3%	8.1%	-0.2%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	9.8%	9.6%	-0.3%
Unclassified	5.4%	4.5%	-1.0%

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage (QCEW) data provides insight into the industrial landscape of Virginia's LWDAs. Figure 4 shows the top two employing industries by LWDA.

Figure 4

LWDA	Top Most Employing Industry	Second Most Employing Industry
Southwestern Virginia (LWDA I)	Retail Trade	Health Care and Social Assistance
New River/Mt. Rogers (LWDA II)	Manufacturing	Educational Services
Western Virginia (LWDA III)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Manufacturing
Shenandoah Valley (LWDA IV)	Manufacturing	Health Care and Social Assistance
Piedmont Workforce Network (LWDA VI)	Educational Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Region 2000/Central VA (LWDA VII)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Manufacturing
South Central (LWDA VIII)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Educational Services
Capital Region Workforce Partnership (LWDA IX)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
Northern Virginia (LWDA XI)	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Alexandria/Arlington (LWDA XII)	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Public Administration
Bay Consortium (LWDA XIII)	Retail Trade	Health Care and Social Assistance
Crater Area (LWDA V)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
Hampton Roads (LWDA XIV)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
West Piedmont (LWDA X)	Manufacturing	Health Care and Social Assistance

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

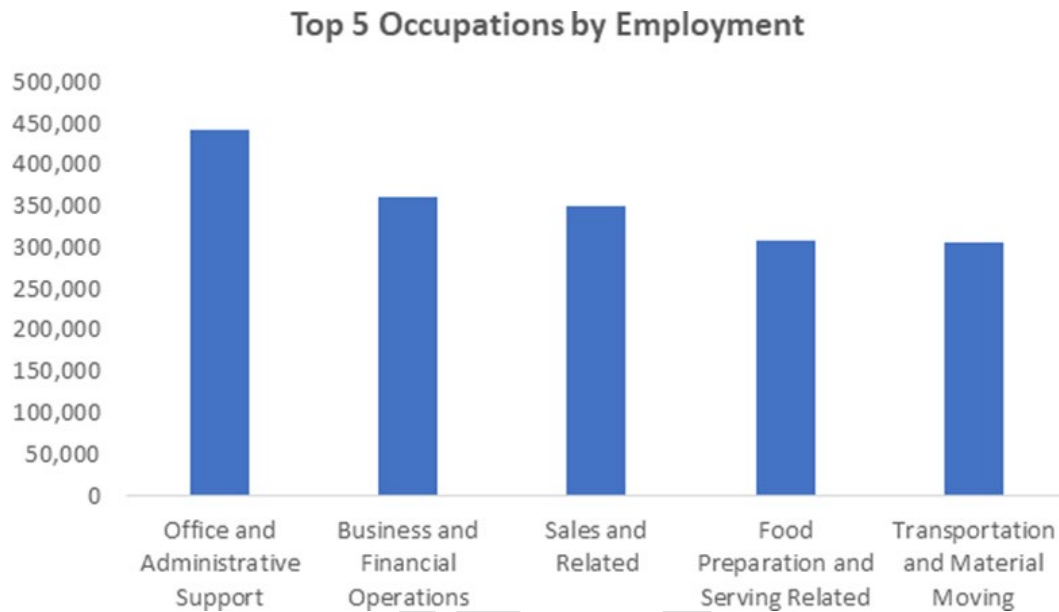
Occupational Landscape

Turning to occupations, Figure 5 displays the most recent annual Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) from 2022 for the top five employing major occupation groups in Virginia. To give perspective, OEWS estimates an employment count of 3,873,060 for Virginia as a whole.

Office and Administrative Support Occupations rank undeniably first in terms of employment levels, with over 11% of statewide employment within that occupational category. Statewide, the median salary for all occupations was \$48,290, which is higher than four out of five of the top employing occupations (all but Business and Financial Operations). The lowest median salary reported was for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations at \$28,540, followed by Personal Care and Service Occupations at \$30,100 and Healthcare Support

Occupations at \$30,620. The highest median salary was predictably for Management Occupations at \$128,750 followed by Computer and Mathematical Occupations at \$109,910 and Legal Occupations at \$101,130.

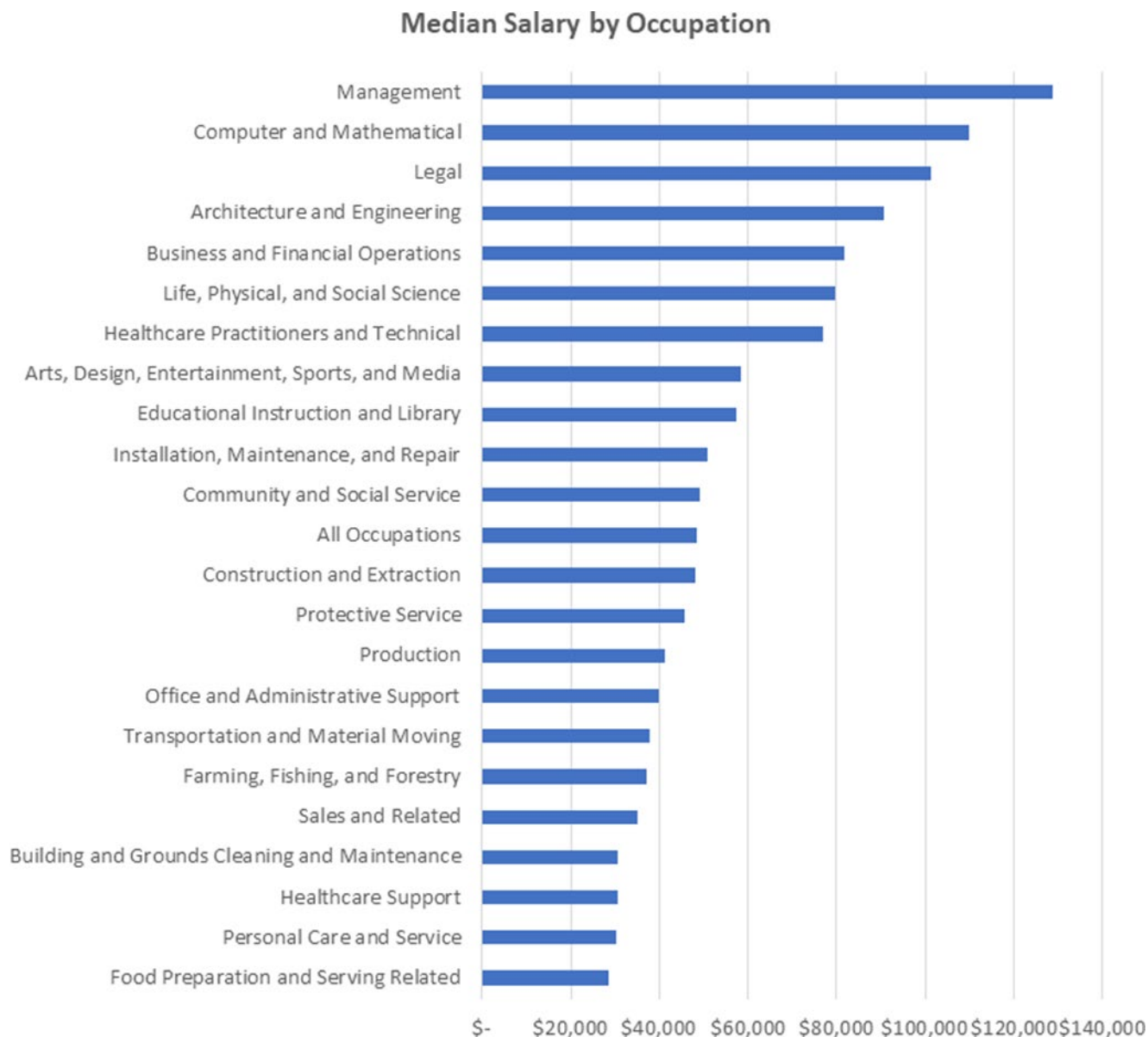
Figure 5



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2022.

Figure 6 shows the median salary for all 22 major occupation groups and illustrates the overwhelming proportion of high paying jobs being concentrated mainly in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. The top six occupations listed below are all from that industry, with median salaries in the \$79,000-\$129,000 range.

Figure 6



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2022.

Statewide OEWS data is also broken down by industry, which provides information on the top employing industry for each major occupation group. As seen in Figure 7, Health Care and Social Assistance notably employed the most both overall and within the Office and Administrative Support Occupations, the occupation group which employs the largest share of Virginians.

Figure 7

Occupation	Top Employing Industry
Total, All Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Management Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Business and Financial Operations Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	Public Administration
Community and Social Service Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Legal Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	Educational Services
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Healthcare Support Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Protective Service Occupations	Public Administration
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	Accommodation and Food Services
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
Personal Care and Service Occupations	Other Services (except Public Administration)
Sales and Related Occupations	Wholesale Trade
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
Construction and Extraction Occupations	Construction
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	Construction
Production Occupations	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	Wholesale Trade

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2022.

ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

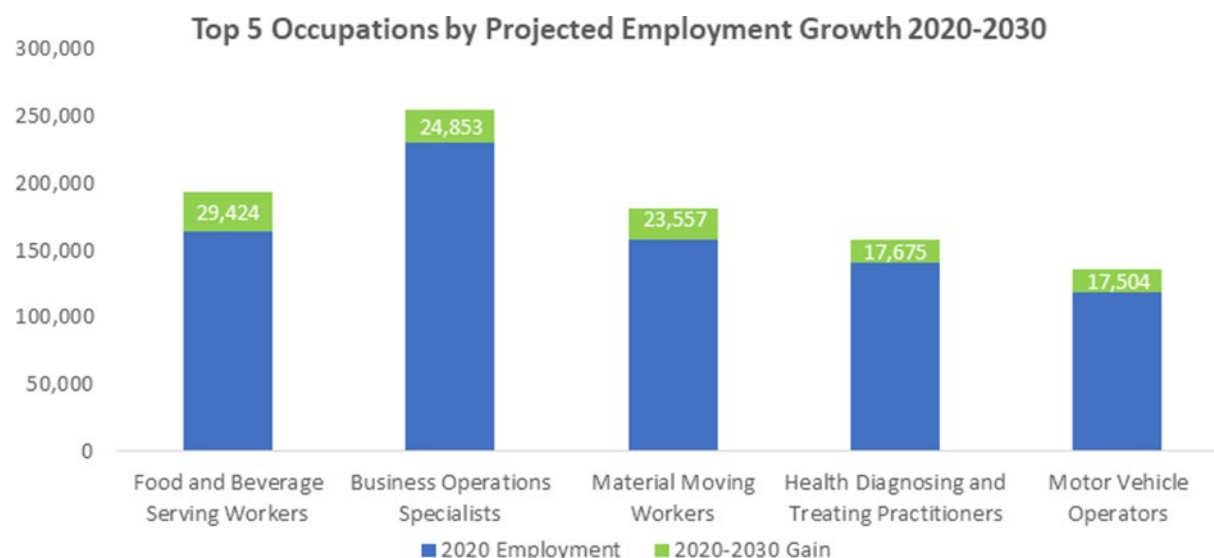
Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

Looking Ahead

Virginia Works produces long- and short-term employment projections for occupations and industries. Figures 8 and 9 show the top five growing and declining occupations as of the most recent 2020 – 2030 long-term employment projections. In terms of growth rates, all top five growing occupations are projected to experience between 1.0 and 1.7% annual growth

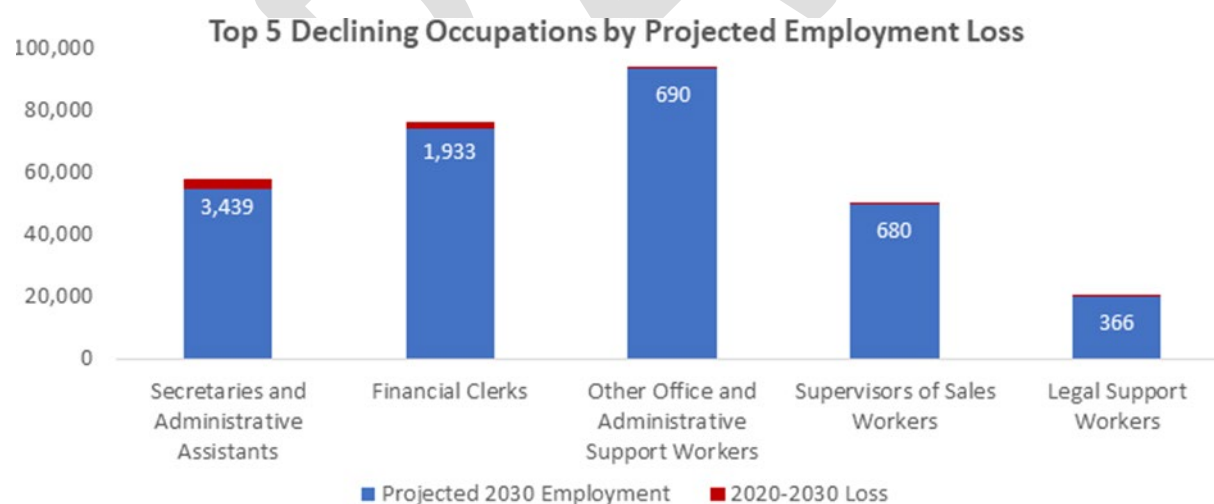
until 2030. All top five declining occupations are only expected to lose less than 1.0% of employment. However, communications equipment operators are worth mentioning despite its small employment size, as they are expected to decline at an annual rate of 2.0% until 2030 (the highest rate of decline).

Figure 8



Source: Virginia Works 2020 – 2030 Long-Term Projections.

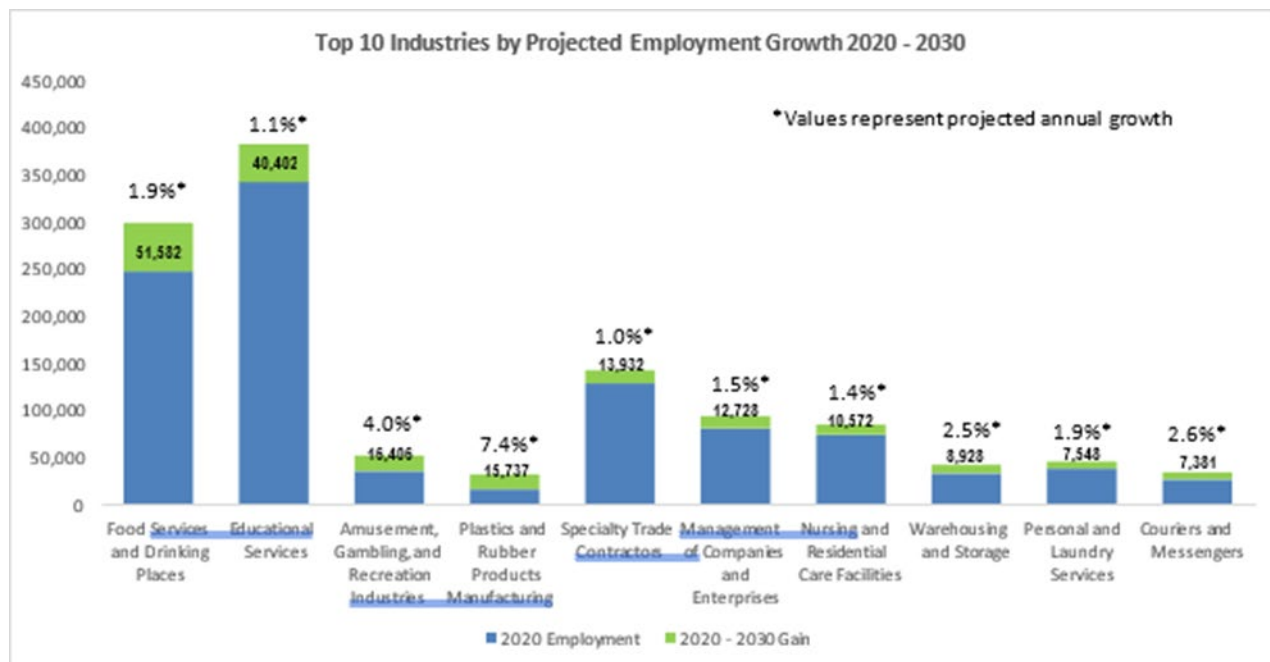
Figure 9



Source: Virginia Works 2020 – 2030 Long-Term Projections.

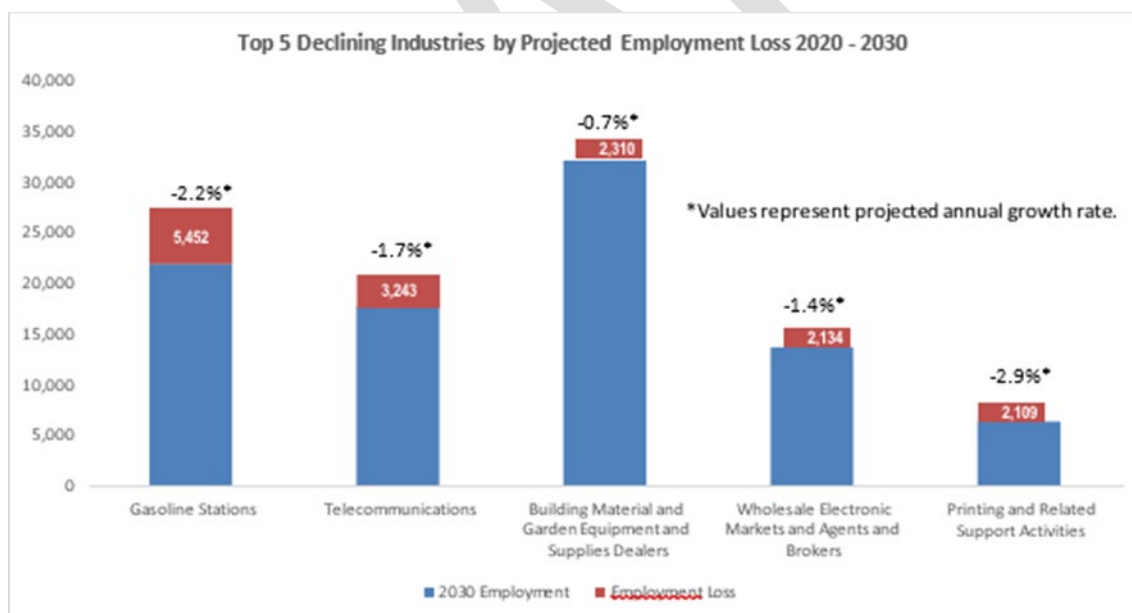
Figures 10 and 11 show projected growth and decline in employment by industry subsector. Three fourths of the 84 subsectors are projected to grow in employment. The Food Services and Drinking Places industry as well as the Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries are expectedly seen in the top ten growing industries, as they were hit hard by the effects of the pandemic. Notable industries projected to lose employment include Mining (except Oil and Gas) (-4.0%), Broadcasting (except Internet) (-2.4%), and Electronics and Appliance Stores (-1.7%).

Figure 10



Source: Virginia Works 2020 – 2030 Long-Term Projections.

Figure 11



Source: Virginia Works 2020 – 2030 Long-Term Projections.

iii. Employers' Employment Needs

Regarding the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Figure 12 below gives an overview of employers' needs by industry. Skills, certifications, and technologies listed are based on employer self-identification in the Virginia Workforce

Connection. Please note that because many job orders do not list these categories, data may skew towards those that do.

Figure 12

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
Industry	Quick Facts	Top 5 Occupations (Estimated Employment based on 2016 projections)	Top Advertised Skills	Top Advertised Certifications
Accommodation and Food Services	• 10.6% of VA jobs • 8,759 Openings • 20,700 Employers • \$9.90 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Personal protective equipment	1. Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers (74,873) 2. Waiters and Waitresses (66,326) 3. Cooks, Restaurant (31,780) 4. First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers (21,258) 5. Cashiers (14,522)	1. Customer service 2. Food preparation 3. Cash handling 4. Inventory management 5. Welcome patrons	1. National Restaurant Association (ServSafe) Certifications 2. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 3. State Food Safety Certifications 4. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 5. TIPS Training Program
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and	• 7.5% of VA jobs • 7,540 Openings • 11,523 Employers • \$22.58 Average	1. Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (32,804) 2. Security Guards (22,030) 3. Landscaping and	1. Customer service 2. Risk management 3. Mops floors 4. Developing new	1. Nursing Credentials and Certifications 2. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
Remediation Services	Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	Groundskeeping Workers (18,361) 4. Customer Service Representatives (10,958) 5. Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (8,781)	5. Maintenance equipment	Certifications 3. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 4. CompTIA A Certifications 5. (ISC) ² Certifications
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	• 0.4% of VA jobs • 202 Openings • 1,609 Employers • \$17.20 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Tractors	1. Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse (26,160) 2. Agricultural Equipment Operators (2,593) 3. First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers (1,363) 4. Logging Equipment Operators (1,131)	1. Customer service 2. Apply pesticides 3. Apply fertilizers 4. Watering 5. Fertilizing	1. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 2. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 3. Green Advantage (GA) Certifications 4. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications 5. Cisco Certifications
		5. Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals (950)		

Employer Needs by Industry Sector

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	• 1.6% of VA jobs • 2,041 Openings • 5,843 Employers • \$13.58 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Amusement and Recreation Attendants (4,515) 2. Cashiers (1,857) 3. Waiters and Waitresses (1,812) 4. Receptionists and Information Clerks (1,544) 5. Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service (1,515)	1. Customer service 2. Cash handling 3. Answer phone calls 4. Food preparation 5. Stand for long periods of time	1. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 2. American Red Cross – First Aid Certifications 3. American Sports and Fitness Association (ASFA) Certifications 4. Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) Certifications 5. National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Certifications
Construction	• 6.3% of VA jobs • 4,160 Openings • 21,892 Employers	1. Construction Laborers (17,063) 2. Supervisors of Construction and	1. Customer service 2. Welding 3. Preventative maintenance	1. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 2. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
	•\$29.43 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	Extraction Workers (14,101) 3. Carpenters (14,073) 4. Electricians (10,715) 5. Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters (8,855)	4. Development of new business 5. Purchase orders	3. Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP) 4. American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) Certifications 5. Project Management Institute (PMI) Certifications
Educational Services	•2.1% of VA jobs •16,474 Openings •7,899 Employers •\$23.35 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Teacher Assistants (24,496) 2. Bus Drivers, School or Special Client (12,906) 3. Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (11,414) 4. Office Clerks, General (10,176) 5. Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food (8,961)	1. Customer service 2. Supervises employees 3. Background investigations 4. Record keeping 5. Curriculum development	1. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 2. Nursing Credentials and Certifications 3. Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) 4. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 5. National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians

Employer Needs by Industry Sector

				(NREMT)
Finance and Insurance	• 4.5% of VA jobs • 2,965 Openings • 14,097 Employers • \$62.28 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Customer Service Representatives (12,824) 2. Tellers (11,231) 3. Insurance Sales Agents (9,851) 4. First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers (6,131) 5. Loan Interviewers and Clerks (5,343)	1. Customer service 2. Risk management 3. Cash handling 4. Developing new business 5. Identify opportunities	1. FINRA Financial Securities Professionals 2. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications 3. Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) (ISC)2 4. Certifications 5. Nursing Credentials and Certifications
Government	• Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft PowerPoint	Not available	1. Developing new business 2. Typing 3. Financial management 4. Customer service 5. Facilitate training	1. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certification 2. Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) Certifications 3. International Economic

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
				Development Council (IEDC) Certification 4. American Society of Military Comptrollers (ASMC) Certification 5. Project Management Institute (PMI) Certifications
Health Care and Social Assistance	• 14.2% of VA jobs • 22,302 Openings • 49,755 Employers • \$24.33 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Registered Nurses (54,344) 2. Nursing Assistants (34,695) 3. Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (18,337) 4. Receptionists and Information Clerks (15,099) 5. Medical Assistants (11,577)	1. Customer service 2. Social perceptiveness 3. Blood draws 4. Catheter care 5. Risk management	1. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 2. Nursing Credentials and Certifications 3. National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) 4. American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) Certifications 5. Nuclear

Employer Needs by Industry Sector

				Medicine Technology Certificatio n Board (NMTCB)
Information	• 2.1% of VA jobs • 2,674 Openings • 6,572 Employers • \$59.75 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Python	1. Customer Service Representatives (4,210) 2. Sales Representatives, Services, All Other (3,850) 3. Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers (3,229) 4. Software Developers, Applications (2,762) 5. Computer User Support Specialists (2,335)	1. Customer service 2. Developin g new business 3. Custo mer advoc ate 4. Risk manage ment 5. Data analytics	1. (ISC)2 Certifications 2. GIAC Certifications 3. CompTIA Certifica tions 4. Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) 5. Cisco Certifications
Management of Companies and Enterprises	• 2.6% of VA jobs • 1,920 Openings • 309 Employers • \$83.60 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Accountants and Auditors (3,725) 2. General and Operations Managers (2,675) 3. Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (2,454) 4. Management Analysts (2,369) 5. Financial Manager (2,360)	1. Spine care 2. Customer service 3. Disch arge plann ing 4. Direct nursing care 5. Utilizing computer ized documen tation systems	1. American Heart Associatio n (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certificatio ns 2. Nursing Credentials and Certification s 3. American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) Certification s

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
				4. American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Designations 5. National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)
Manufacturing	• 7.5% of VA jobs	1. Team Assemblers (11,822)	1. Customer service 2. Welding	1. CompTIA Certifications
	• 6,663 Openings • 7,851 Employers • \$30.68 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	2. First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers (9,001) 3. Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (6,896) 4. Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers (6,702) 5. Machinists (5,096)	3. Preventative maintenance 4. Developing web-based applications 5. Risk management	2. (ISC)2 Certifications 3. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 4. GIAC Certifications 5. Cisco Certifications

Employer Needs by Industry Sector

Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	• 0.2% of VA jobs • 182 Openings • 261 Employers • \$35.58 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators (758) 2. Mine Cutting and Channeling Machine Operators (679) 3. Continuous Mining Machine Operators (632) 4. Helpers-Extraction Workers (202) 5. Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines (183)	1. Customer service 2. Maintenance equipment 3. Welding 4. Preventative maintenance 5. Performance appraisals	1. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 2. American Red Cross – First Aid Certification 3. Council for Professional Recognition – Credentials 4. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 5. Nursing Credentials and Certifications
Other Services (except Public Administration)	• 4.3% of VA jobs • 3,271 Openings • 38,621 Employers • \$22.63 Average Hourly Wage	1. Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists (9,368) 2. Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1. Customer service 2. Developing new business 3. Mops floors 4. Improve patient care 5. Leadership development	1. Nursing Credentials and Certifications 2. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 3. American Red Cross – First Aid Certification

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
	• Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	(7,170) 3. Office Clerks, General (5,187) 4. Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment (4,945) 5. Childcare Workers (4,897)		4. National Restaurant Association (ServSafe) Certification 5. Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP) Certification
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	• 13.8% of VA jobs • 42,139 Openings • 37,208 Employers • \$55.40 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Management Analysts (27,472) 2. Software Developers, Applications (23,439) 3. Accountants and Auditors (18,825) 4. Software Developers, Systems Software (18,326) 5. Computer Systems Analysts (17,153)	1. Customer service 2. Risk management 3. Developing new business 4. Data analytics 5. Developing web-based applications	1. (ISC)2 Certifications 2. GIAC Certifications 3. CompTIA Certifications 4. Cisco Certifications 5. Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA)
Public Administration	• 66.7% of VA jobs • 3,693 Openings • 8,286 Employers • \$48.95 Average Hourly Wage	1. Correctional Officers and Jailers (6,834) 2. Highway Maintenance Workers (2,959)	1. Customer service 2. Maintains records 3. Crisis intervention 4. Word processing	1. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 2. Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
	• Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	3. Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other (2,184) 4. Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists (2,007) 5. Office Clerks, General (1,943)	5. Financial management	3. Nursing Credentials and Certifications 4. Social Worker Credentials & Certifications 5. American Red Cross – First Aid Certifications
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	• 1.7% of VA jobs • 1,490 Openings • 13,697 Employers • \$30.20 Average Hourly Wage • Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (7,554) 2. Office Clerks, General (3,296) 3. Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers (1,739) 4. Real Estate Brokers (1,622) 5. Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive (1,614)	1. Customer service 2. Preventative maintenance 3. General maintenance 4. Maintaining occupancy levels 5. Apartment maintenance	1. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 2. National Apartment Association (NAA) Certifications 3. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications 4. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 5. National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Certifications

Employer Needs by Industry Sector

Retail Trade	•12.4% of VA jobs •15,018 Openings •31,572 Employers •\$15.28 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Cash Register	1. Retail Salespersons (109,799) 2. Cashiers (85,675) 3. Stock Clerks and Order Fillers (40,032) 4. First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (27,868) 5. Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (10,725)	1. Customer service 2. Inventory management 3. Inventory control 4. Verifies proof of legal drinking age 5. Mathematical Skills	1. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 2. National Registry of Food Safety Professionals (NRFSP) Certifications 3. Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) 4. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 5. (ISC)2 Certifications
Transportation and Warehousing	•3.9% of VA jobs •1,583 Openings •6,015 Employers •\$25.78 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	1. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (22,261) 2. Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (16,175) 3. Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers (6,641) 4. Industrial Truck and	1. Customer service 2. Delivers mail 3. Maintains records 4. Preventative maintenance 5. Inventory counting	1. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 2. Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP) – Craftworker and Coating Certifications 3. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 4. National

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
		Tractor Operators (5,110) 5. Flight Attendants (4,080)		Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) 5. Refrigerating Engineers & Technicians Association (RETA)
Unclassified	•0.7% of VA jobs •37,380 Openings •17,270 Employers •\$22.83 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology:	Not available	1. Customer service 2. Bookkeeping 3. Data warehousing 4. Inspect apartments 5. Leasing apartments	1. Microsoft PowerPoint 2. Structured Query Language (SQL) 3. Extensible markup language (XML) 4. Extensible stylesheet language
	Microsoft PowerPoint			transformations (XSLT) 5. Microsoft (MS) Office
Utilities	•0.3% of VA jobs •352 Openings •346	1. Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers (1,645) 2. Electrical Engineers (603) 3. Electrical and	1. Customer service 2. Welding 3. Root cause analysis	1. National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) Credentials 2. Commercial Driver's License

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
	Employers •\$67.98 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Microsoft (MS) Office	Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation, and Relay (564) 4. Customer Service Representatives (467) 5. Control and Valve Installers and Repairers, Except Mechanical Door (404)	4. Regulatory compliance 5. Manage multiple projects	(CDL) 3. American Welding Society (AWS) Certifications 4. American Board for Occupational Health Nurses (ABOHN) Certifications 5. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications
Wholesale Trade	•3.4% of VA jobs •2,939 Openings •7,071 Employers •\$43.43 Average Hourly Wage •Top Advertised Tool or Technology: Forklift	1. Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products (19,774) 2. Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (6,007) 3. Customer Service Representatives (4,220) 4. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (4,188) 5. Stock Clerks and Order	1. Customer service 2. Stock merchandise 3. Welding 4. Operate forklift 5. Mops floors	1. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) 2. American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) Certifications 3. American Heart Association (AHA) CPR & First Aid Certifications 4. Nursing Credentials and Certifications 5. CompTI

Employer Needs by Industry Sector				
		Fillers (4,172)		A Certifica tions

Source: Virginia Workforce Connection, Industry Profile.

Figure 13 shows employer needs by top 10 occupations by number of postings in Virginia Workforce Connection. This chart, in particular “job openings” and “available candidates” information is also pertinent to Section B: IV of this document.

Figure 13

Employer Needs by Top 10 Occupations by Number of Postings in VAWC				
Occupation	Job Openings, Available Candidates, and Average Annual Wage	Top 5 Employer Advertised Skills	Top 5 Employer Advertised Certifications	Employer Advertised Education and Experience
Registered Nurses	• 7,610 Openings • 77 Candidates • \$94,385 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Social perceptiveness 3. Discharge planning 4. Evaluates patient care 5. Direct nursing care	1. Registered Nurse (RN) 2. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification 3. Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS) 4. Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) 5. Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	• Bachelor's Degree • 1+ years of experience
			1. Certified	

Employer Needs by Top 10 Occupations by Number of Postings in VAWC

Computer Systems Engineers/Architects	• 2,914 Openings • 67 Candidates • \$99,603 avg wage	1. Risk management 2. System Integration 3. System design 4. Agile software development 5. Software design	Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) 2. Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) 3. Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) 4. CompTIA Security + Certification 5. Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP)	• Bachelor's Degree • 6+ years of experience
Retail Salespersons	• 2,754 Openings • 235 Candidates Available • \$33,879 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Inventory management 3. Answer phone calls 4. Verifies proof of legal drinking age 5. Cash handling	1. Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) 2. Commercial Drivers License (CDL) 3. Certified Occupancy Specialist Advanced (COSA) 4. TIPS Certification 5. Certified Laboratory Equipment Specialist (CLES)	• High School diploma • No experience needed
Software	• 2,904	1. Developing web-based applications	1. Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	

Employer Needs by Top 10 Occupations by Number of Postings in VAWC

Developers	Openings • 188 Candidates Available • N/A	2. Software engineering experience 3. Software development experience 4. Leadership development 5. Shell scripting	2. Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP) 3. Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) 4. GIAC Security Essentials (GSEC) 5. CompTIA Security + Certification	• N/A
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	• 1,538 Openings • 44 Candidates Available • \$62,389 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Direct nursing care 3. Social perceptiveness 4. Administering medications 5. Skilled nursing care	1. Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) 2. Registered Nurse (RN) 3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification 4. Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) 5. Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	• Some College courses • 1+ years of experience
Customer Service Representatives	• 1,726 Openings • 1,222 Candidates Available • \$36,155 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Mops floors 3. Dusting 4. Bag merchandise 5. Verifies proof of legal drinking age	1. Registered Nurse (RN) 2. Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) 3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	• High School diploma • 6+ months of experience

Employer Needs by Top 10 Occupations by Number of Postings in VAWC

			4. Licensed Property and Casualty Insurance Agent	
			5. Certified Insurance Service Representative (CISR)	
Computer Programmers	• 1,822 Openings • 50 Candidates Available • \$103,308 avg wage	1. Developing web-based applications 2. Agile software development 3. Software development experience 4. Customer service 5. Software design	1. ServiceNow Certified Application Developer (CAD) 2. Cannabis Insurance Coverage Specialist (CICS) 3. Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) 4. ServiceNow Certified System Administrator (CSA) 5. CompTIA Security + Certification	• Bachelor's Degree • 6+ months of experience
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	• 1,497 Openings • 50 Candidates Available • \$47,313 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Inventory management 3. Restaurant management 4. Performance appraisals 5. Cash handling	1. Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) 2. TIPS Certification 3. Commercial Drivers License (CDL) 4. ServSafe Food Handler	• High School diploma • No experience needed

Employer Needs by Top 10 Occupations by Number of Postings in VAWC

			5. certification ServSafe Alcohol certification	
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	• 1,688 Openings • 124 Candidates Available • \$74,428 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Risk management 3. Experience with Linux 4. Provide technical support 5. Developing web-based applications	1. Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) 2. Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP) 3. CompTIA Security + Certification 4. GIAC Security Essentials (GSEC) 5. Global Industrial Cyber Security Professional (GICSP) Certification	• Bachelor's Degree • 6+ years of experience
Fast Food and Counter Workers	• 1,384 Openings • 88 Candidates Available • \$30,247 avg wage	1. Customer service 2. Food preparation 3. Cash handling 4. Mops floors 5. Taste test food	1. Registered Nurse (RN) 2. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification 3. Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS) 4. Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) 5. Certified Nuclear Medicine Technologists (CNMT)	• Less than a High School diploma • No experience needed

Source: Virginia Workforce Connection, occupation profile, skills, certifications, and technologies based on employer self-identification in the Virginia Workforce Connection.

Please note that as many job orders do not list these categories, data may skew towards those that do.

Note: Job openings count is for January 2024. Job openings include all online postings, after de-duplication efforts. Candidate count is individuals with active resumes in the Virginia Workforce Connection that specify a preference for a given occupation as of January 23, 2024. Not all positions advertised include wage information and education requirements.

B. Workforce Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include—

i. Employment and Unemployment

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) provide comprehensive data on the labor force based on household interviews conducted each month for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Also known as “the household survey,” LAUS distinguishes between whether a person is employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force.

According to LAUS data, the civilian labor force in Virginia increased 179,559 over program year 2023 (July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023). Reaching 4,635,410, the labor force experienced a 4.0% over- the-year growth rate in June 2023, the largest annual growth since May 1978.

There were indicators of labor market strength in program year 2023, as captured in Figure 14. Labor force participation increased to a rate of 67.3% and the unemployment rate decreased to what many would consider full employment levels. A decreasing unemployment rate coupled with an increase in the labor force and the labor force participation rate indicates that workers are beginning to reenter the workforce more substantially after the pandemic.

Figure 14

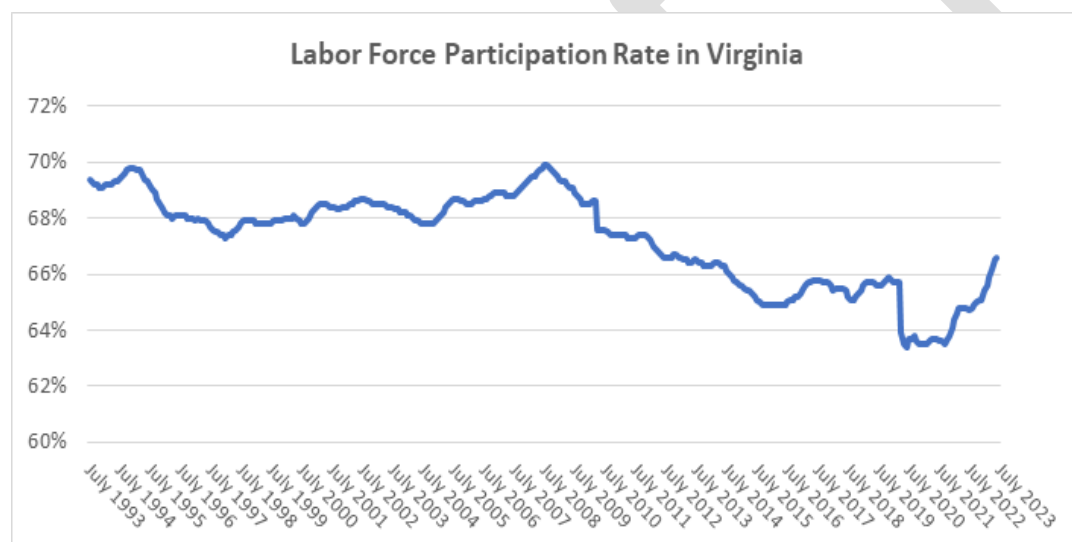
Unemployment Statistic	June 2023	June 2022	1-Year Actual Change	1-Year Percent Change
Labor Force	4,635,410	4,455,851	179,559	4.03%
Number of Employed	4,503,903	4,324,426	179,477	4.15%

Number of Unemployed	131,507	131,425	82	0.06%
Unemployment Rate	2.8%	2.9%	-0.1%	-3.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	67.3%	65.2%	2.1%	3.1%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Not Seasonally Adjusted).

As Figure 15 conveys, labor force participation languished before 2023 but has increased significantly in Virginia to exceed pre-COVID levels since the beginning of the year. The lowest reported month for seasonally adjusted labor force participation (63.4%) occurred in June 2020, in the aftermath of the pandemic shutdowns. June's reading of 66.6% was the highest since January 2013.

Figure 15



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Seasonally Adjusted).

Though 2022's labor market tightness more closely resembled recent expansionary periods than recessionary periods, it was distinct from both and increased inefficiency in job markets coming out of the 2020 COVID recession. Was this shift an outcome of COVID-era labor market disruptions?

Partially, but the job openings rate has trended upward since the Great Recession of 2007-2009. At the same time, declining labor force participation has been a factor in lowering unemployment rates over that period. Perhaps the dislocation of 2020 and 2021's subsequent reordering of labor markets heightened these trends. However, they appear to have resumed a decade-long trajectory, driven by secular demographic and technological changes and the ongoing challenge of matching the skills of available workers with those that employers are searching for.

Figure 16 illustrates the continuing story of strong success in three of the LWDA's, and the consequential positive statistics at the state level. It also shows the evidence of struggles in other regions of the state. Since reaching an all-time high in March of 2020, the unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing statewide. However, approximately two thirds of LWDA's (11 out of 15) have an unemployment rate above the state level of 2.8%. Alexandria/Arlington has the lowest unemployment rate at 2.1%, well below the state average. The highest unemployment rate was in Southwestern Virginia at 4.0%. These rates reflect some regions' struggles related to the decline of manufacturing and traditional goods-producing industries, along with the economic impact of COVID-19.

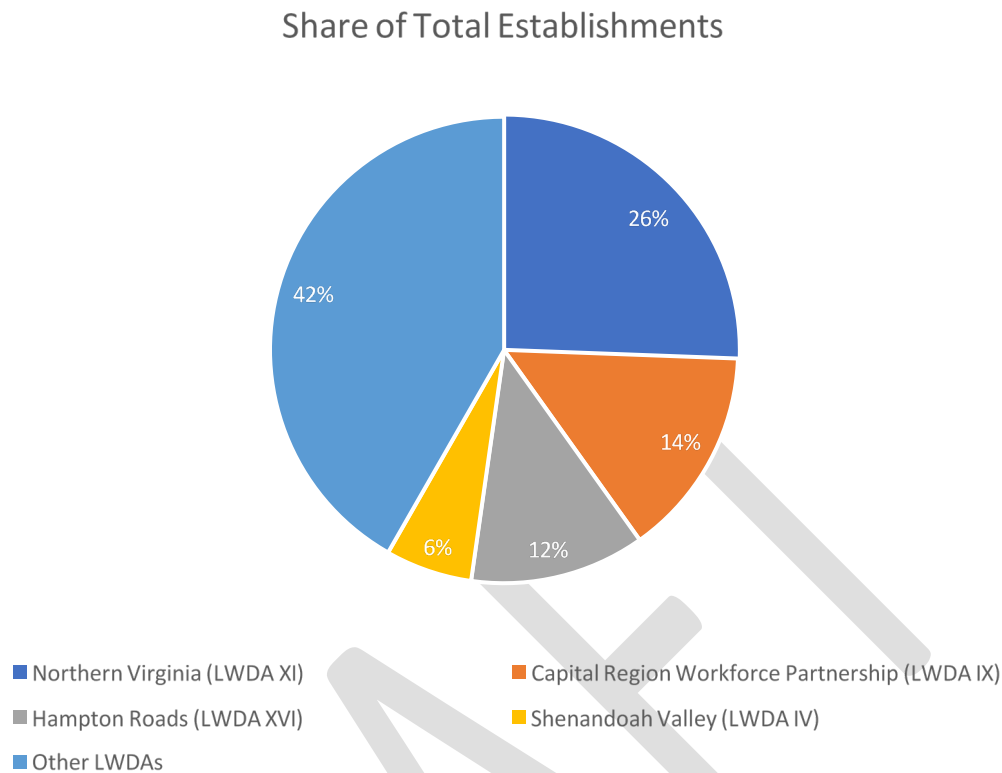
Figure 16

Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
I Southwestern Virginia	70,983	68,168	2,815	4.0%
II New River/Mt. Rogers	186,129	180,090	6,039	3.2%
III Western Virginia	174,504	169,483	5,021	2.9%
IV Shenandoah Valley	291,133	282,981	8,152	2.8%
V Crater Area	77,277	74,476	2,801	3.6%
VI Piedmont Workforce Network	240,669	234,257	6,412	2.7%
VII Region 2000/Central Virginia	126,743	122,347	4,396	3.5%
VIII South Central	83,121	80,132	2,989	3.6%
IX Capital Region Workforce Partnership	634,239	615,901	18,338	2.9%
X West Piedmont	86,518	83,374	3,144	3.6%
XI Northern Virginia	1,235,744	1,204,659	31,085	2.5%
XII Alexandria/Arlington	270,798	264,995	5,803	2.1%
XIII Bay Consortium	277,106	268,963	8,143	2.9%
XIV Hampton Roads	880,449	854,079	26,370	3.0%
Virginia	4,635,410	4,503,903	131,507	2.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Not Seasonally Adjusted).

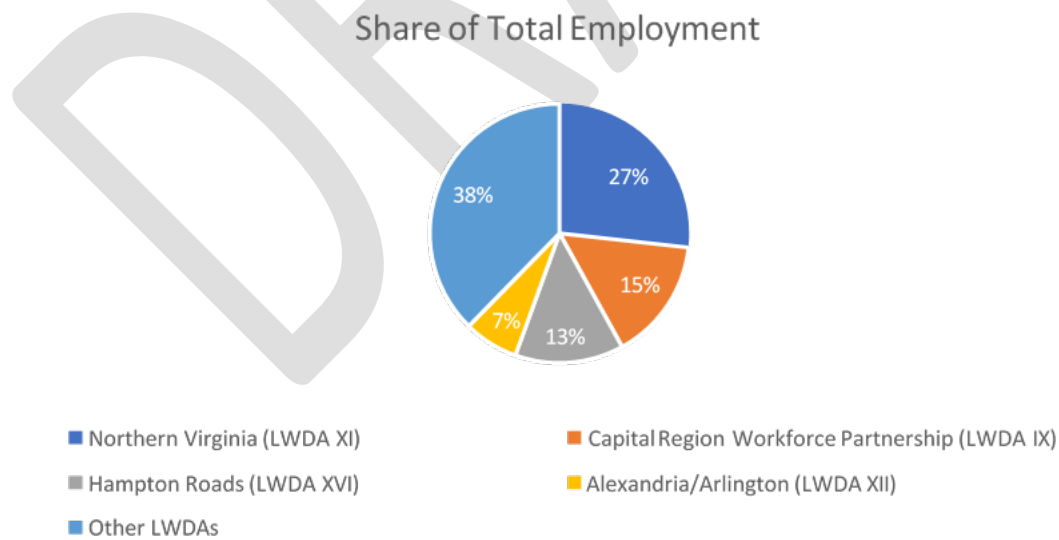
The continued story of concentration of population, establishments, employment, and wages in LWDA's like Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and Capital Region Workforce Partnership is echoed in Figures 17-19, which show that Virginia's economic landscape is dominated by these areas. All areas saw consistently high wage growth due to the high inflation rates seen in 2022 through early 2023.

Figure 17



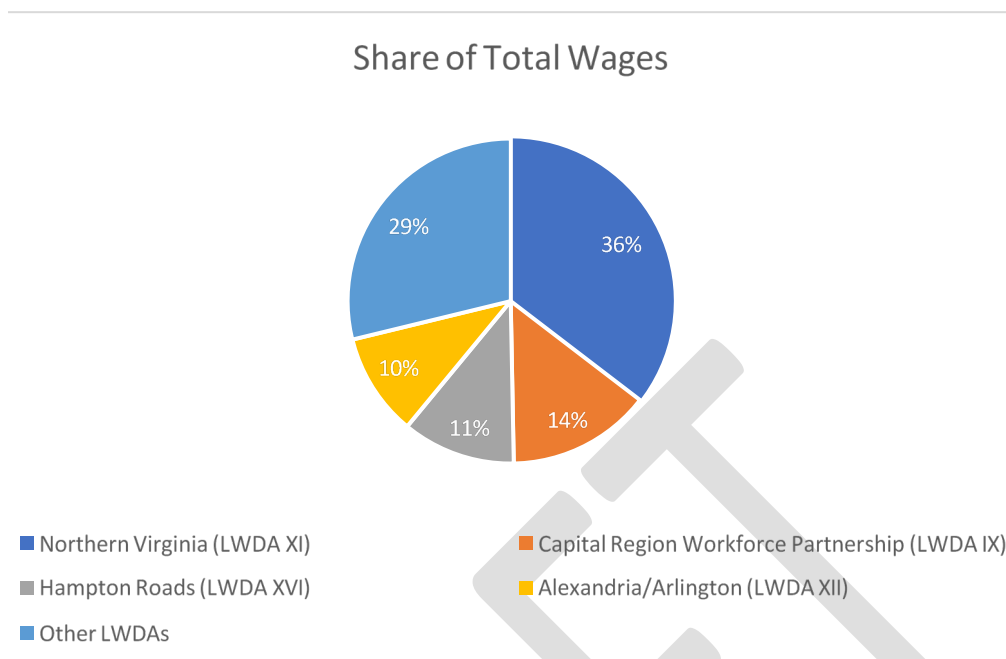
Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

Figure 18



Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

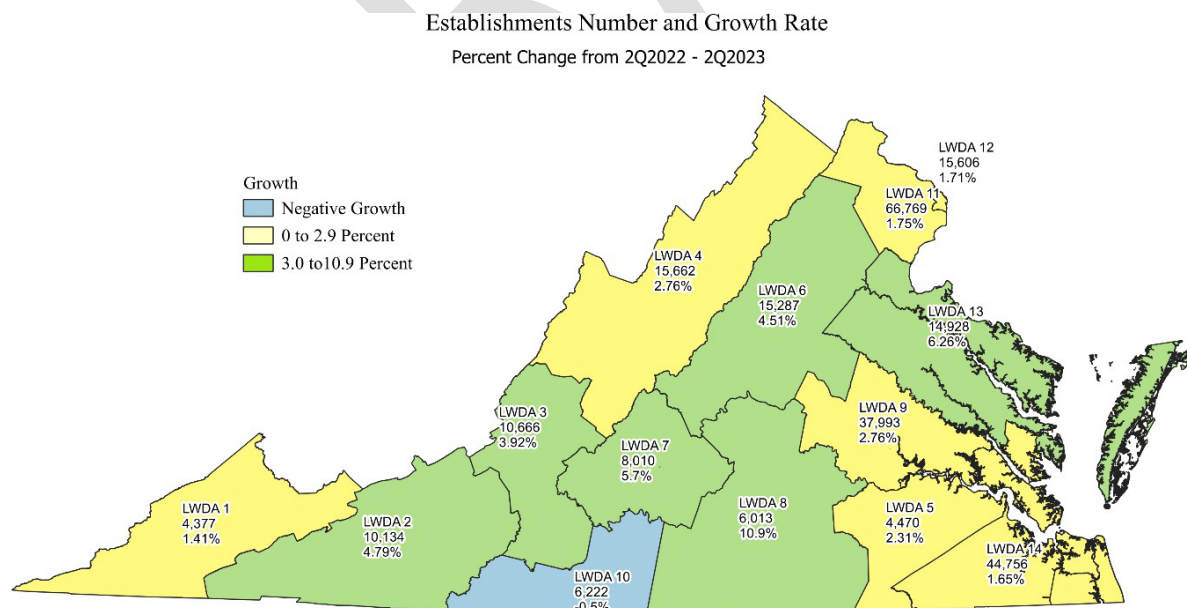
Figure 19



Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

Figure 20 shows establishment number and growth rate in each LWDA. The areas with the highest percentage change in number of establishments included South Central area which is encouraging given that the area comprises a small proportion of the state population, meaning that the economy in this area shows potential for an uptick.

Figure 20



Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2023.

Unemployment Insurance Data

Figures 21 and 22 below show Virginia Works data on weekly initial and continued claims since the start of calendar year 2022 and for the last week of program year 2023. Claims trended gradually upward during program year 2023 but have maintained what are considered generally normal levels. Benefit week ending July 1, 2023, saw 2,487 initial claims and 13,313 continued claims. For context, three years before, during the May 16, 2020, filing week - and the height of pandemic shutdowns - continued weeks peaked at just over 400,000 claims.

Figure 21

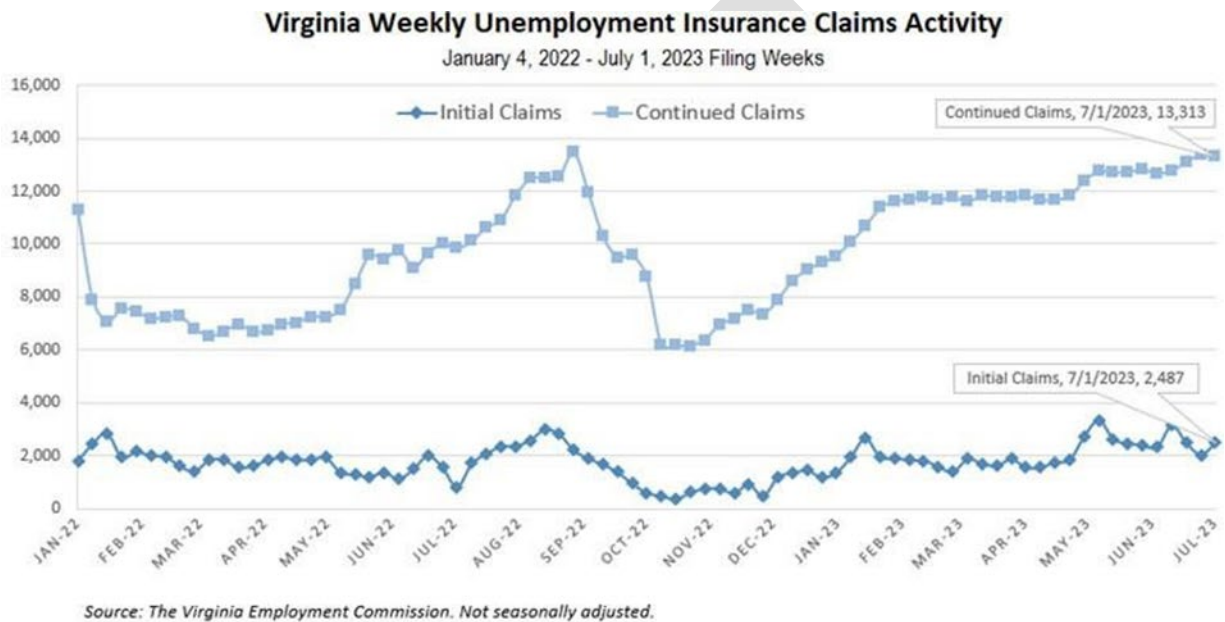


Figure 22

Benefit Week Ending Date	Initial Claims	Continued Weeks Claimed
07/01/2023	2,487	13,313
06/24/2023	2,038	13,381
07/02/2022	827	9,834

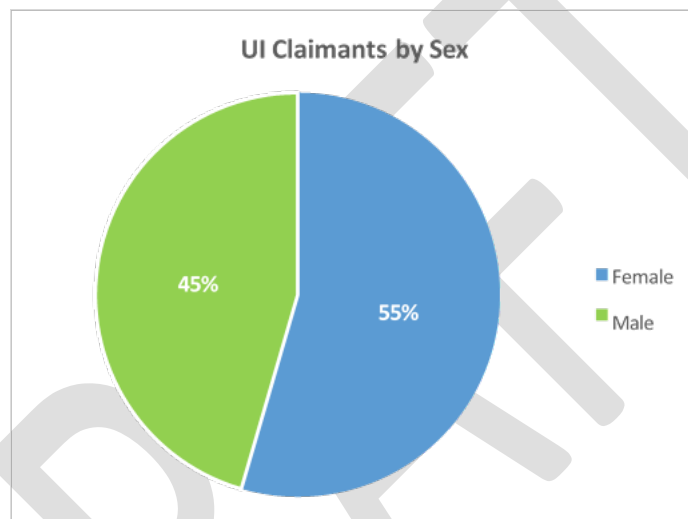
Source: Virginia Works, ETA-539 report.

In program year 2023, about \$209 million was paid in unemployment benefits for 168,398 initial claims and 732,382 continued claims. The average weekly benefit amount received by claimants for the first quarter of 2023 was \$341. Compared to a statewide average weekly wage of \$1,478, this made for a wage replacement rate of 23.1%. The total number of claimants has increased by around 21% in program year 2023. This increase could be

attributed to a loosening labor market as the economy continues to recover from the extreme labor market tightness of the post-COVID-19 economy.

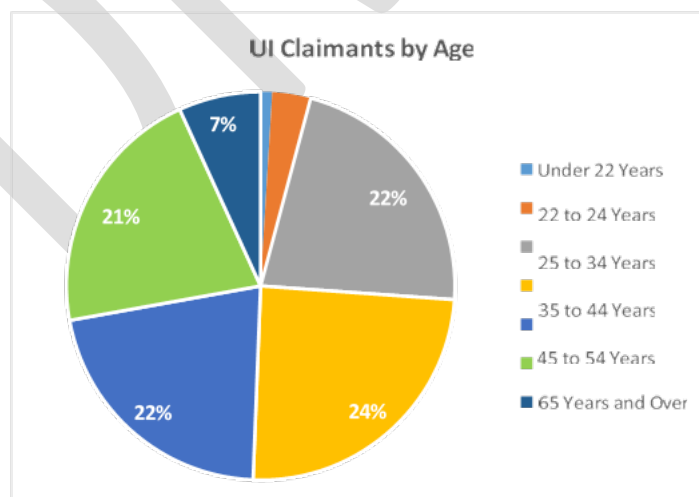
Figures 23 and 24 examine unemployment insurance claimants in Virginia by sex and age. Females made up a much larger segment of initial claims in June. Since most measures of labor force participation show lower participation of females compared to males, the higher number of female claimants stands out further. Generally, the industries and occupations with the largest number of claims tend to have a female leaning skew of employment, leading to a higher number of female claimants compared to male claimants overall. Looking at age, for most of the “prime age” categories, the number of claimants is relatively even in percentage terms.

Figure 23



Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report.

Figure 24



Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report.

Figures 25 and 26 look at unemployment claimants in terms of industries and occupations. In terms of industries, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, has risen from third

highest claims volume to first, pushing Administration and Support Services to second. Manufacturing has risen from sixth highest claims volume to third. The top three occupations by number of claimants have remained the same from last year.

Figure 25

Top 5 Occupations by Number of Claimants			
June 2023 Occupations	Claimants	June 2022 Occupations	Claimants
Office and Administrative Support	2,538	Office and Administrative Support	2,500
Management	2,477	Management	1,801
Business and Financial Operations	1,335	Business and Financial Operations	976
Transportation and Material Moving	1,101	Sales and Related	944
Computer and Math	1,029	Food Preparation and Serving Related	907
Total, All Occupations	16,412	Total, All Occupations	13,608

Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report.

Figure 26

Top 5 Industries by Number of Claimants			
June 2023 Industries	Claimants	June 2022 Industries	Claimants
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,568	Administration and Support, Waste Management, and Remedial Services	1,294
Administration and Support, Waste Management, and Remedial Services	1,327	Healthcare and Social Assistance	1,104
Manufacturing	1,104	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,094
Healthcare and Social Assistance	990	Accommodation and Food Services	971
Retail Trade	842	Retail Trade	873

Total, All Industries	16,412	Total, All Industries	13,608

Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report.

ii. Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

Virginia's labor market was strong and performed above average: After a slow start to recovery and a struggle to reopen in 2021, Virginia became a pandemic recovery leader in program year 2023. While experiencing an acceleration in labor market growth, Virginia maintained a low unemployment rate and saw a return to the low, pre-pandemic levels of unemployment insurance claims.

It was a job seekers' labor market, with historically tight conditions empowering job seekers and helping to raise wages: Labor market conditions in program year 2023 seemed unusually tight because, while the falling unemployment rate had returned to pre-pandemic levels, the number of job openings climbed to record levels. Taken together, were these a signal that we were in an economic expansion or an economic downturn? Data indicates that pandemic labor markets brought about a shift to some new condition in the labor market unrelated to economic expansion or contraction, in which it became less efficient in matching labor demand with available labor supply.

Challenges remain in program year 2023 despite labor market strength. Economic data hasn't caught up and lags very strong labor market trends: Although the Commonwealth's labor markets grew more rapidly than most of the country during program year 2023, less strength was shown in the main measure of state economic growth – the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by state accounts and slowing population growth in the last decade has also likely been a drag on the Commonwealth's economic expansion. Inflation has offset rising worker wages: Wages were on the rise during program year 2023, but inflation was rising faster. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing Virginians from inflation has been declining home affordability as rising home prices and climbing mortgage rates crowded out some Virginians from participating in the housing market.

Trends in BLS Jobs Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) indicate that the Commonwealth's labor market was tighter and more active than in much of the country and remained strong heading into the second half of 2023. Virginia's June 2023 churn rate (a measure of movement from job to job) slowed slightly to 8.4% from May's revised 8.6%, indicating still elevated velocity of rotation into and out of jobs and continued confidence in workers' ability to leave their current job for a better job. Job quitting was one driver of the rapid pace of movement of workers between jobs.

JOLTS data shows job quitting remained well above pre-pandemic levels in Virginia during program year 2023. Quits—a component of total separations—are voluntary separations initiated by the employee. An estimated 117,000 workers quit their jobs from Virginia employers in June. This was 12.5% growth over-the-year and a 38% increase from five years earlier. A chief motivation for many workers to move from job to job was higher wages.

Wages in program year 2023 rose rapidly as employers struggled to attract and retain workers; especially in industries that were hard hit by the pandemic's effects like the Leisure and Hospitality sector. While private sector hourly wages rose 7.4% from the reopening begun in May 2020 to May 2023, Leisure and Hospitality - the sector with the highest concentration of minimum wage workers - rose 20% over that period. This divergence of trends is recent and differs from pre-pandemic long-term trends.

After the historic reshuffling of labor markets of two years ago, most JOLTS indicators trended towards more normal, pre-pandemic conditions in program year 2023. In June and during the first half of 2023, the velocity of movement from job to job steadily slowed nationwide in 2023. At the same time, the ability to fill open positions has steadily improved since 2021 with hiring ability at typical, long-term trends in the Commonwealth. Quits as a percentage of all job separations has also trended downward in 2023 nationwide, but with less evidence of this in Virginia. Nationwide, the number of job openings decreased by 13% over the year.

Though the state minimum wage was increased multiple times in recent years, massive dislocation from the pandemic shutdowns likely played a larger role in wage inflation in key minimum wage industries. Over the last three years, the Virginia hourly minimum wage increased from \$7.25 in 2020 to \$9.50 in 2021, from \$9.50 to \$11 in 2022, and from \$11 to \$12 in 2023. Effects from changes in the minimum wage take time to move through labor markets, so the few years since the implemented increases may not be sufficient to fully capture resulting impacts on wages. Also, isolating the level of influence that the minimum wage increases had on the sharp rise in Leisure and Hospitality wages is difficult because of the distortions in labor markets and inflation-driven pressure on wages present nationwide during the pandemic and post-pandemic periods of the last three years.

Virginia has not only increased minimum wage on a tiered basis in recent years, but the Commonwealth has also worked to close loopholes in minimum wage law. In April 2023, Governor Glenn Youngkin signed House Bill (HB) 1924, which, as of July 1, 2023 outlawed the practice of hiring and paying workers with disabilities less than minimum wage. Those employers with a special certificate authorized under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act to pay certain employees with disabilities less than minimum wage prior to July 1, 2023, will be grandfathered in and given until July 1, 2030, when their authorization ends, to raise pay for these workers to Virginia's minimum wage.

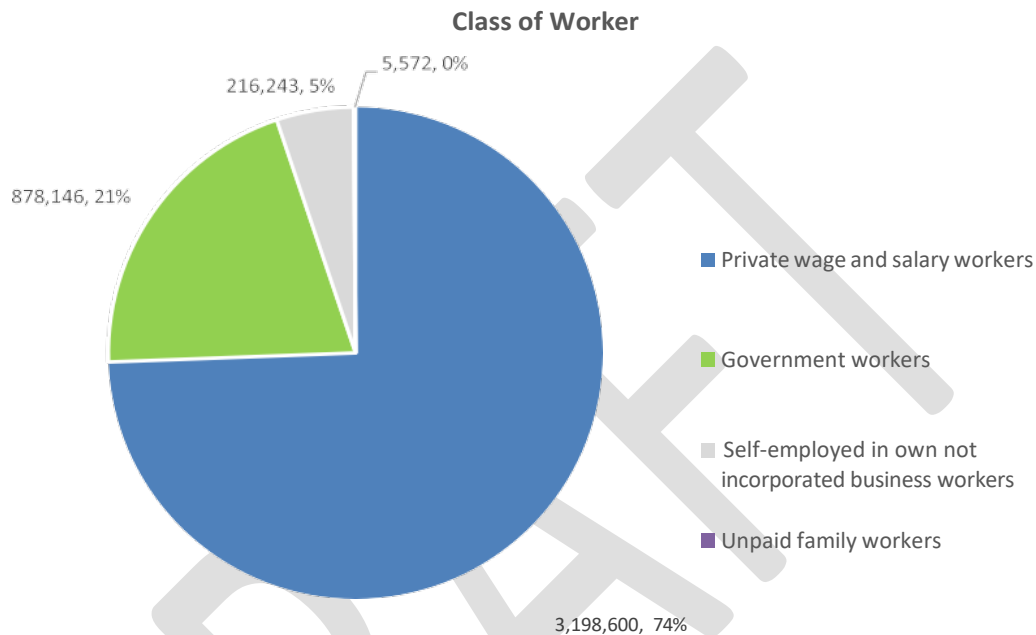
Currently over 4% of workers in Virginia have a disability, and as the workforce ages, this number will continue to increase. However, only 34% of disabled adults aged 21-64 in Virginia are employed, perhaps because sub-minimum wages are shown to exacerbate the already high rates of poverty found among disabled workers.

The passage of House Bill 1924 offers adults with disabilities the chance to work at a living wage in integrated environments that supply them with opportunities for growth and success. As the Commonwealth's workforce ages, championing equal and accessible work environments will benefit more workers and allow for more diverse and innovative workplaces.

For a full article on this topic, go to: www.virginiaworks.com/docs/Publications/Press-Releases-and-Reports/PDF/JulyFeaturedArticle.pdf.

Figure 27 below shows class of worker for the Virginia civilian employed population 16 years and older (4,298,561). The vast majority of workers are private wage and salary workers (74%), but government workers make up a strong 21%. The remaining workers are classified as self-employed or unpaid family workers.

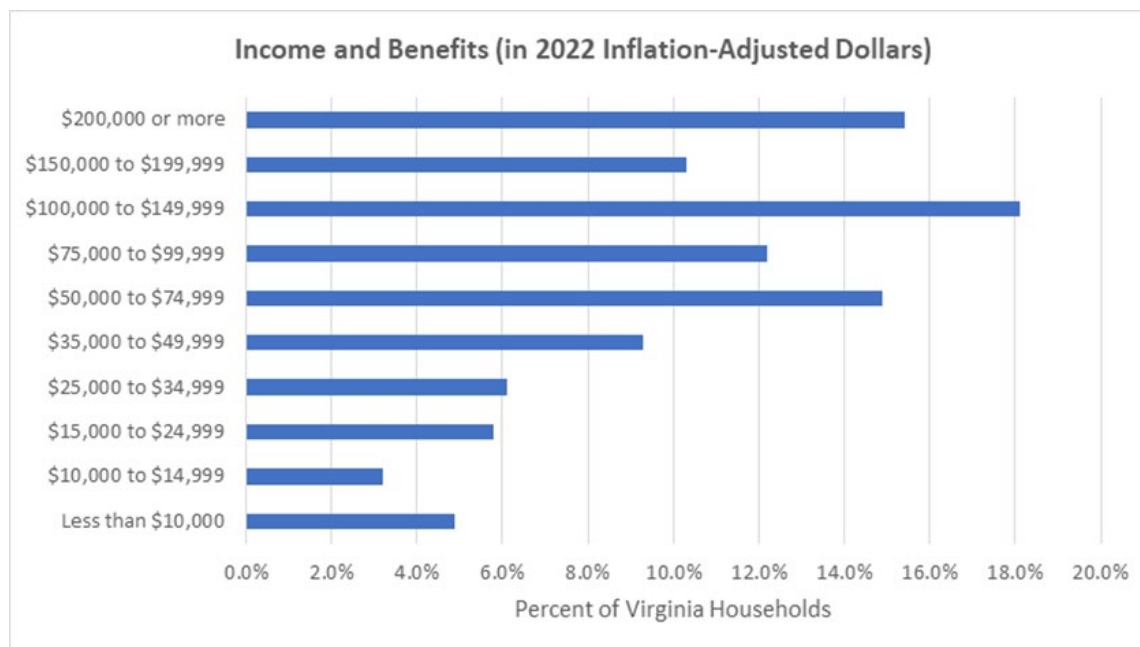
Figure 27



Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 1-Year Estimates.

Figure 28 shows the percentage of the 3,380,607 total Virginia households in each category of income and benefit amount. Notably, 20% of Virginian households have a household income below \$34,999, and 43.8% have a household income of \$100,000 or above. Median household income was \$85,873, with median family income quite a bit higher at \$107,101. Per capita income across the state averaged \$47,199. In 2022, 7.4% of all families and 10.6% of all people had an income below the poverty level. This is an increase from past years, which saw 6.9% of families and 10.2% of individuals with an income below the poverty level in 2021, and 6.5% of families and 9.9% of all individuals with an income below the poverty level in 2019 (2020 ACS one-year estimates are not available).

Figure 28



Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 1-Year Estimates.

Another economic indicator to mention is computer and Internet use. This is especially prudent as leaders in Virginia focus efforts to increase broadband access across the state. According to the American Community Survey 2022 one-year estimates, 95.5% of total households in Virginia own a computer, with 90.9% having a broadband Internet subscription, leaving approximately 309,049 households with no subscription.

iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

Figure 29 outlines Virginia statewide educational attainment according to the 2022 1-year American Community Survey. Skill level of the workforce will be further addressed in Section B:IV of this document.

Figure 29

Population Group	Total	Percent	Male	Percent Male	Female	Percent Female
AGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 25 years and over	5,978,782	(X)	2,909,974	(X)	3,068,808	(X)

Less than 9th grade	209,876	3.5%	108,461	3.7%	101,415	3.3%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	295,899	4.9%	154,151	5.3%	141,748	4.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,431,624	23.9%	750,306	25.8%	681,318	22.2%
Some college, no degree	1,067,612	17.9%	507,664	17.4%	559,948	18.2%
Associate's degree	451,737	7.6%	189,007	6.5%	262,730	8.6%
Bachelor's degree	1,409,942	23.6%	663,933	22.8%	746,009	24.3%
Graduate or professional degree	1,112,092	18.6%	536,452	18.4%	575,640	18.8%
High school graduate or higher	5,473,007	91.5%	2,647,362	91.0%	2,825,645	92.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	2,522,034	42.2%	1,200,385	41.3%	1,321,649	43.1%
Population 25 to 34 years	1,156,622	(X)	590,593	(X)	566,029	(X)
High school graduate or higher	1,097,024	94.8%	554,649	93.9%	542,375	95.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	521,817	45.1%	237,103	40.1%	284,714	50.3%
Population 35 to 44 years	1,180,820	(X)	592,931	(X)	587,889	(X)
High school graduate or higher	1,094,498	92.7%	543,750	91.7%	550,748	93.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	564,482	47.8%	258,249	43.6%	306,233	52.1%
Population 45 to 64 years	2,179,298	(X)	1,073,565	(X)	1,105,733	(X)
High school graduate or higher	1,994,380	91.5%	973,831	90.7%	1,020,549	92.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	911,500	41.8%	440,185	41.0%	471,315	42.6%
Population 65 years and over	1,462,042	(X)	652,885	(X)	809,157	(X)
High school graduate or higher	1,287,105	88.0%	575,132	88.1%	711,973	88.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	524,235	35.9%	264,848	40.6%	259,387	32.1%

RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

White alone	3,792,296	(X)	1,863,963	(X)	1,928,333	(X)

High school graduate or higher	3,562,300	93.9%	1,739,618	93.3%	1,822,682	94.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,704,938	45.0%	825,966	44.3%	878,972	45.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	3,719,810	(X)	1,826,674	(X)	1,893,136	(X)
High school graduate or higher	3,500,672	94.1%	1,708,372	93.5%	1,792,300	94.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,679,111	45.1%	812,731	44.5%	866,380	45.8%
Black alone	1,090,143	(X)	514,664	(X)	575,479	(X)
High school graduate or higher	975,018	89.4%	456,324	88.7%	518,694	90.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	310,996	28.5%	133,207	25.9%	177,789	30.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	17,965	(X)	9,316	(X)	8,649	(X)
High school graduate or higher	14,415	80.2%	7,167	76.9%	7,248	83.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4,338	24.1%	1,910	20.5%	2,428	28.1%
Asian alone	433,811	(X)	200,004	(X)	233,807	(X)
High school graduate or higher	394,280	90.9%	183,778	91.9%	210,502	90.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	275,860	63.6%	131,191	65.6%	144,669	61.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	4,476	(X)	2,005	(X)	2,471	(X)
High school graduate or higher	4,010	89.6%	1,751	87.3%	2,259	91.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,923	43.0%	739	36.9%	1,184	47.9%
Some other race alone	225,092	(X)	117,067	(X)	108,025	(X)
High school graduate or higher	159,902	71.0%	81,637	69.7%	78,265	72.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	53,295	23.7%	24,934	21.3%	28,361	26.3%
Two or more races	414,999	(X)	202,955	(X)	212,044	(X)

High school graduate or higher	363,082	87.5%	177,087	87.3%	185,995	87.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	170,684	41.1%	82,438	40.6%	88,246	41.6%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	512,384	(X)	262,206	(X)	250,178	(X)
High school graduate or higher	396,091	77.3%	199,787	76.2%	196,304	78.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	156,824	30.6%	77,451	29.5%	79,373	31.7%

MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2022 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)						
Population 25 years and over with earnings	55,607	(X)	64,525	(X)	47,280	(X)
Less than high school graduate	30,436	(X)	36,498	(X)	21,407	(X)
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	39,730	(X)	46,450	(X)	30,867	(X)
Some college or associate's degree	45,135	(X)	54,515	(X)	38,271	(X)
Bachelor's degree	73,893	(X)	88,211	(X)	60,677	(X)
Graduate or professional degree	96,914	(X)	120,363	(X)	79,392	(X)

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 1-Year Estimates.

Figure 30 shows the educational attainment of available candidates enrolled in Virginia Workforce Connection. Candidates are defined as individuals with an active resume in the Virginia Workforce Connection.

Figure 30

Educational Attainment of Available Candidates, Statewide		
Education Level	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Less than High School	579	2.70%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	7334	34.18%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	1677	7.82%
Vocational School Certificate	1,114	5.19%
Associate's Degree	3,628	16.91%

Bachelor's Degree	4,719	21.99%
Master's Degree	2,113	9.85%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	288	1.34%

Source: Virginia Works, Virginia Workforce Connection.

Figure 31 gives educational attainment by LWDA.

Figure 31

LWDA	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Southwestern Virginia (LWDA I)	4,850	(x)
Less than High School	115	2.37%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,522	31.38%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	410	8.46%
Vocational School Certificate	225	4.64%
Associate's Degree	799	16.47%
Bachelor's Degree	1,135	23.40%
Master's Degree	553	11.40%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	89	1.84%
New River/Mt. Rogers (LWDA II)	6,151	(x)
Less than High School	170	2.76%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,087	33.93%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	502	8.17%
Vocational School Certificate	287	4.67%
Associate's Degree	1,057	17.18%
Bachelor's Degree	1,322	21.49%
Master's Degree	623	10.13%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	102	1.66%
Western Virginia (LWDA III)	5,849	(x)
Less than High School	132	2.26%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,904	32.55%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	458	7.83%
Vocational School Certificate	314	5.37%
Associate's Degree	979	16.74%
Bachelor's Degree	1,338	22.88%
Master's Degree	617	10.55%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	105	1.80%
Shenandoah Valley (LWDA IV)	5,400	(x)
Less than High School	98	1.82%

LWDA	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,564	28.96%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	388	7.18%
Vocational School Certificate	274	5.07%
Associate's Degree	856	15.85%
Bachelor's Degree	1,389	25.72%
Master's Degree	718	13.30%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	111	2.05%
Piedmont Workforce Network (LWDA VI)	6,134	(x)
Less than High School	80	1.30%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,547	25.22%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	439	7.16%
Vocational School Certificate	278	4.53%
Associate's Degree	954	15.55%
Bachelor's Degree	1,771	28.87%
Master's Degree	925	15.08%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	137	2.23%
Region 2000/Central VA (LWDA VII)	4,951	(x)
Less than High School	91	1.84%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,481	29.91%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	354	7.15%
Vocational School Certificate	259	5.23%
Associate's Degree	826	16.68%
Bachelor's Degree	1,237	24.99%
Master's Degree	605	12.22%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	96	1.94%
South Central (LWDA VIII)	5,192	(x)
Less than High School	105	2.02%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,506	29.01%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	385	7.42%
Vocational School Certificate	281	5.41%
Associate's Degree	838	16.14%
Bachelor's Degree	1,329	25.60%
Master's Degree	646	12.44%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	100	1.93%
Capital Region Workforce Partnership (LWDA IX)	6,757	(x)

LWDA	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Less than High School	104	1.54%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,843	27.28%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	495	3.35%
Vocational School Certificate	342	9.04%
Associate's Degree	1,099	16.27%
Bachelor's Degree	1,864	27.59%
Master's Degree	874	12.94%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	134	1.99%
Northern Virginia (LWDA XI)	6,780	(x)
Less than High School	56	0.83%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,407	20.75%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	417	6.16%
Vocational School Certificate	272	4.01%
Associate's Degree	977	14.41%
Bachelor's Degree	2,233	32.94%
Master's Degree	1,243	18.33%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	174	2.57%
Alexandria/Arlington (LWDA XII)	5,294	(x)
Less than High School	48	0.91%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,094	20.67%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	333	6.30%
Vocational School Certificate	217	4.10%
Associate's Degree	765	14.45%
Bachelor's Degree	1,706	32.23%
Master's Degree	994	18.78%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	136	2.56%
Bay Consortium (LWDA XIII)	7,077	(x)
Less than High School	100	1.41%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,768	24.98%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	509	7.19%
Vocational School Certificate	324	4.58%
Associate's Degree	1,123	15.87%
Bachelor's Degree	2,067	29.21%
Master's Degree	1,039	14.68%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	145	2.05%
Crater Area (LWDA V)	5,208	(x)

LWDA	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Less than High School	81	1.56%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,444	27.73%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	368	7.07%
Vocational School Certificate	263	5.05%
Associate's Degree	849	16.30%
Bachelor's Degree	1,417	27.21%
Master's Degree	683	13.11%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	101	1.94%
Hampton Roads (LWDA XIV)	11,828	(x)
Less than High School	141	1.19%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	3,117	26.35%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	851	7.19%
Vocational School Certificate	645	5.45%
Associate's Degree	2,115	17.88%
Bachelor's Degree	3,224	27.26%
Master's Degree	1,500	12.68%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	232	1.96%
West Piedmont (LWDA X)	5,280	(x)
Less than High School	113	2.14%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,700	32.19%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	399	7.57%
Vocational School Certificate	308	5.83%
Associate's Degree	903	17.10%
Bachelor's Degree	1,186	22.46%
Master's Degree	573	10.85%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	98	1.86%

Source: Virginia Works, Virginia Workforce Connection.

iv. Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion

Describe areas of opportunity for meeting hiring, education, and skills needs identified in the economy compared to the assets available in the labor force in the state.

As seen below in Figure 32, candidates on Virginia Workforce Connection tend to be ~~very~~ more experienced compared to what is required by many job postings. Virginia must find a way to increase the number of candidates for employers who have the highest number of openings, such as the employers advertising for occupations listed in Figure 32. This includes

encouraging job seekers to gain certifications and licenses in computer related fields and healthcare fields.

Figure 32

Subject	Job Openings	Potential Candidates	Potential Candidates per Job Opening
Statewide Total	189,707	21,482	0.11
Top 6 Occupations by Job Openings			
Registered Nurses	7,610	77	0.01
Computer Systems Engineers/Architects	2,914	67	0.02
Retail Salespersons	2,754	235	0.09
Software Developers	2,904	188	0.06
Computer Programmers	1,822	50	0.03
Customer Service Representatives	1,726	1,222	0.71
Educational Attainment			
High School Diploma or Equivalent	9,767	7,338	0.75
Vocational School Certificate	143	1,113	7.78
Associate's Degree	2,149	3,635	1.69
Bachelor's Degree	15,018	4,727	0.31
Post-Graduate Degree	1,725	2,407	1.40
Work Experience			
Less than 1 year	10,083	1,392	0.14
1 to 2 years	166,139	440	0.00
2 to 5 years	8,248	1,160	0.14
5 to 10 years	4,287	1,998	0.47
More than 10 years	950	16,492	17.36

Source: Virginia Works, Virginia Workforce Connection.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill

needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required ⁶ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.⁷

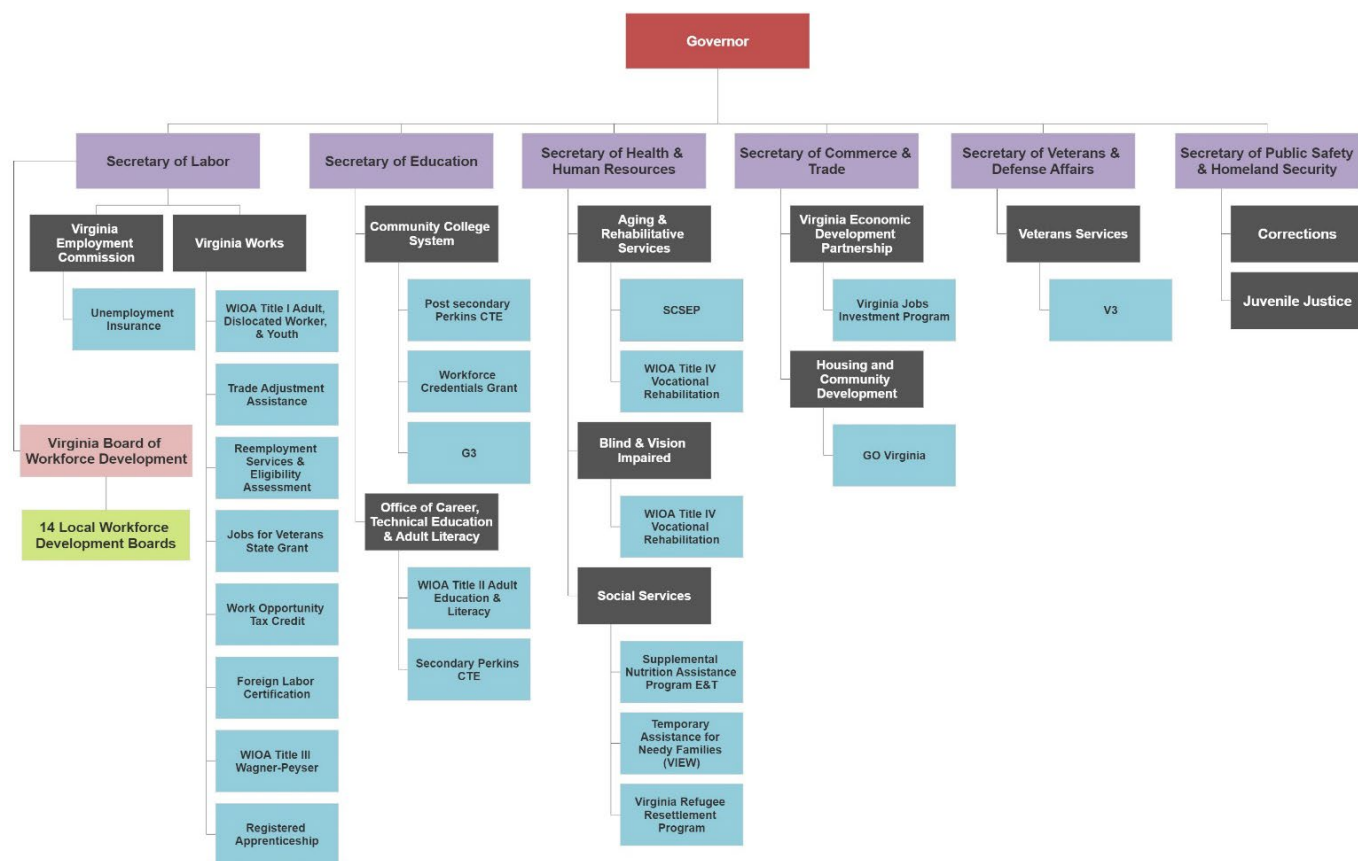
[6] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[7] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

State Workforce Development Activities

The Commonwealth's workforce system embraces an integrated approach to delivering tailored workforce development solutions. It aspires to focus state and local leadership on regional labor demands and then engage the training capacity and expertise of Virginia Works, school divisions, VCCS, local workforce development boards (LWDBs), one-stop career centers, job developers, career coaches, vocational rehabilitation counselors, adult education providers, community-based organizations, and a broad spectrum of supportive services to prepare Virginia's citizens for high-skilled, high-wage jobs. In Virginia, American Job Centers are referred to as Virginia Career Works Centers and one-stop centers.

Fourteen of the 24 Virginia workforce programs are included in this Plan. Virginia expects to engage these programs, as well as others, as we operationalize the discussed strategies to achieve our stated goals. An organizational chart of the programs included in this plan is provided:



Virginia Works (Department of Workforce Development and Advancement)

Virginia Works administers Title I of WIOA, a critical backbone for Virginia's workforce system, and supports the state's Layoff Aversion program. Virginia Works also administers Title III of WIOA. The Employment Service (or Job Service), established by the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, provides job search assistance and recruiting and referral services to employers. Services available to workers include job referral and placement, referral to training, and job search activities.

Other programs administered by Virginia Works:

- *Registered Apprenticeship* - Virginia Works is the designated State Apprenticeship Agency responsible for the administration of the Registered Apprenticeship program that is compliant with the National Voluntary Apprenticeship Act of 1937. Through this employment training model, an apprentice is recruited and selected by an employer and receives on-the-job training specific to the occupation. Related technical instruction is combined with the training and can be delivered in many ways that meet the needs of the sponsoring employer. Virginia Works facilitates the registration process for the employer by providing guidance on the training program and the selection of technical instruction.
- *Jobs for Veterans State Grant* - The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) provides funds to the Commonwealth to serve eligible veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(4) and 4211(4), and other eligible spouses as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(5), and to perform outreach to employers. JVSG funds pay for two types of staff positions:

- Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists – DVOPs provide individualized career services and assist job-seeking veterans in their search for employment, focusing on service to veterans with disabilities, eligible veterans, and eligible persons with (Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs), and additional populations as described in VPL 03-14, changes 1 and 2, and VPL 03-19 or current guidance. DVOPs offer a wide range of workforce services to veterans and other eligible persons coordinated through a case management approach.
- Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) – LVERs assist employers in a locality in identifying qualified veterans for employment. LVERs conduct seminars for employers, conduct job search workshops, and refer employers to employment, training, and job placement services. LVER program staff conduct outreach to employers on behalf of all veteran customers. The LVER works with employers to develop job opportunities for veterans and promote the value of hiring veterans within the larger workforce. In Virginia, LVERs also perform a supervisory role of DVOP staff and as such are titled Lead LVERs (LLVERs).
- *Trade Adjustment Assistance Act* - The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is a federal program established under the Trade Act of 1974. The TAA Program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced because of increased imports. The goal is to help such laid-off workers return to suitable employment as quickly as possible. TAA offers a variety of benefits and reemployment services including training, job search and relocation allowances, income support and other reemployment services. Employers may file a petition for certification as an affected employer or a petition may be filed by a group of three or more workers, their union, or other authorized representative. Workers on whose behalf a petition is filed must be, or must have been, employed regularly at the firm or subdivision identified in the petition. Worker's employment must be, or must have been, related to the production of articles (products) described in the petition.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

VDOE administers Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) as well as activities funded through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

VDOE is the designated state agency with primary responsibility for skills development and integrated workforce preparation for non-native speakers and adults with skills below the twelfth-grade level. VDOE's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) supports, with federal and state funding, programs, activities, and services that include adult education and literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training. Specific education programs include:

- *Adult Basic Education (ABE)* - Basic skills instruction, as well as integrated career and college preparation for adults who are performing below the ninth-grade level.

- *Adult Secondary Education (ASE)* - Basic skills instruction, as well as integrated career and college preparation for adults who are performing above the ninth-grade level, but below the twelfth-grade completer level.
- *English Language Acquisition (ELA)* - Basic skills instruction, as well as integrated career and college preparation for adults who are speakers of other languages.
- *Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education* - English (IELCE) literacy and civics education programs are provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Participants achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Services include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition, lessons on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and, in some cases, workforce training.
- *Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals (C&I)* - Basic skills instruction below the twelfth-grade level as well as integrated career and college preparation for adults incarcerated in local and regional jails and other institutionalized individuals.
- *High School Equivalency (HSE)* - OCTAE also holds primary responsibility for high school equivalency testing in the Commonwealth and for the National External Diploma Program (NEDP®) for high school completion.
- *PluggedIn Virginia (PIVA)* - OCTAE holds primary responsibility for the PluggedIn Virginia workforce development program that delivers integrated education and training in high-demand occupations by adult education providers.
- *Secondary Career Technical Education* – Career and technical education programs in Virginia public schools serve more than 297,000 students in grades 6-12. These programs are designed to prepare young people for productive futures while meeting the Commonwealth's need for well-trained and industry-certified technical workers.

Virginia acknowledges the vital contribution of career and technical education to students and the Commonwealth through diploma seals awarded by the Board of Education, by recognizing Board approved industry credentialing in its diploma requirements, using career pathways as an integral part of the newly required academic and career plan, and by providing real-world high-quality Work-Based Learning experiences that are integrated with classroom instruction.

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)

VEC administers the unemployment insurance program, created by the Social Security Act of 1935, is administered by each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands with oversight by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Federal law provides the guidelines, but the 53 jurisdictions determine many requirements related to eligibility, benefit levels, and tax rates. The UI program has three broad objectives:

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- Alleviate hardship for the unemployed
 - Promote reemployment
 - Provide economic support for communities facing significant job loss

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DARS & DBVI)

DARS and DBVI jointly administer vocational rehabilitation programs through Title IV of WIOA. Vocational rehabilitation employment services help people with disabilities get ready for, find, and keep jobs. Virginia has a residential training and medical rehabilitation facility, the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville, Virginia, as well as several DARS field offices. DARS collaborates with a network of community rehabilitation providers, also known as Employment Services Organizations, which provide employment and vocational services throughout the Commonwealth. For students with disabilities moving from high school to further education, work, or independence, DARS collaborates with schools in providing transition services. DARS also works with one-stop career centers to provide workforce services to persons with disabilities. DARS also administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) that enhances job opportunities for unemployed older Americans and promotes them as a source for businesses seeking trained, qualified, and reliable employees.

DBVI serves eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind by providing vocational rehabilitation employment services, including career development, to adults and transition-aged students who are interested in obtaining, regaining, or maintaining employment. Services are provided at the local level through six regional offices and through community rehabilitation providers. DBVI also operates a residential training facility, the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in Richmond, Virginia. Referrals are accepted from individuals seeking services, family members, friends, physicians, advocates, community services providers, one-stop career centers, and other interested stakeholders.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)

VDSS is a state supervised and locally administered social services system. Providing oversight and guidance to 120 local offices across the state, VDSS delivers a wide variety of services and benefits to over 1.7 million Virginians each year. The Department's goal is to promote the well-being of Virginia's citizens through the delivery of essential services and benefits to ensure families are strengthened, and individuals achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency. The following are VDSS programs included in this plan:

- *SNAP E&T*- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) is a multi-component employment and training program that provides job search, job search training, education, training and work experience, and support services, including transportation and child care, to non-public assistance SNAP recipients. The program's role is to provide SNAP recipients with opportunities that will lead to paid employment and decrease dependency on assistance programs.

SNAP E&T is the only open-ended federal entitlement for workforce services. The goal of the program is to help participants succeed on a career path to earn a family sustaining wage.

- *TANF* - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides temporary cash assistance and employment-related services to enable families with children to become self-supporting. The program promotes economic independence through participation in the Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) program, which offers employment-related activities, education, training, and needed support services. The goal of the program is to help participants succeed on a career path to earn a family sustaining wage.
 - *Employment Advancement for TANF Participants* – The Employment Advancement for TANF Participants Program is a competitive program funded by TANF that supplements the VIEW program and is designed to prepare current and certain former TANF clients to enter, succeed, and advance in the workforce through proven service approaches and strategies.

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS)

VCCS is designated as the state agency with primary responsibility for coordinating workforce training from the postsecondary to the associate degree level, excluding career and technical education programs provided through and administered by the public school system. Virginia's 23 community colleges act as a primary hub for Virginia's workforce system by helping job seekers increase their skill level and find employment. The system works closely with industries in every region of the Commonwealth to develop curriculum and deliver training that aligns with current and emerging workforce needs.

The VCCS also is responsible for postsecondary activities funded through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. This triangulation of activities helps to increase access and support integrated career pathways. In addition to credit-based education, each of Virginia's Community Colleges has a dedicated Workforce Development Services office to help individuals and businesses engaged in shorter-term training and programs.

B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Strengths

Virginia has a strong tradition of collaboration among the many state agencies and fourteen local workforce boards that administer workforce services programs in the state. This collaborative spirit has enabled workforce development stakeholders to share information, gain knowledge about activities outside their spheres of influence, and work collectively to obtain workforce grants and other resources. Virginia's workforce professionals enjoy a particular collegiality, which helps stakeholders deal amicably with the workforce system. Examples of collaboration include:

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- Alignment of multiple state workforce programs under one state agency, Virginia Works.
 - Appointing representatives from multiple workforce service organizations to the Accessibility Taskforce, which seeks to ensure universal service delivery to all those seeking workforce services in Virginia
 - Coordinating state and local Business Solutions Teams to provide workforce services to businesses around the Commonwealth
 - Establishing the Workforce Data Trust, the first-of-its-kind, cloud-based technology solution forms a more secure bridge across legacy case management systems, allowing for the sharing of data between workforce agencies in real time. The new capacity will reveal the full scale of the workforce system's collective impact and allow Virginians to connect more easily to the workforce services they need.
 - An enormous strength of Virginia's workforce system is the support it garners from the Governor, the legislature, and stakeholders outside of state government (such as the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Virginia Manufacturers' Association, and others). This support provides critical momentum for innovation, while sustaining promising workforce practices for the long run.

Promising initiatives involving these stakeholders include:

- **Build Virginia:** Connecting workers throughout the Commonwealth with training and employment in the high-demand industries of construction, trades, shipbuilding, advanced manufacturing, and energy. The initiative aims to ensure that all Virginians have the opportunity to access a new collar job, regardless of where they live or their skill level.
- **Workforce Data Quality Initiative:** In 2023, the Commonwealth was awarded \$2.9 million to develop and enhance databases to analyze programs that provide workforce training and employment services. Combining this effort with the Workforce Data Trust will allow Virginia Works to establish a comprehensive approach to performance metrics and measures across all workforce development programs Commonwealth-wide.
- **Apprenticeship Expansion:** In 2023, the Commonwealth was awarded \$927,372 in grant funding from the federal Department of Labor to expand Virginia's already successful apprenticeship efforts. Virginia aims to expand and diversify state apprenticeship programs in industries including advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, infrastructure and clean energy, education, and healthcare. These efforts will be combined with apprenticeship expansion efforts funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).
- **Virginia Healthcare Workforce Advisory Council:** Created to bring together public and private stakeholders to develop and prioritize policy recommendations that can guide the Commonwealth's current and future healthcare workforce needs.

- Federal investments to advance workforce development: Through the IRA, Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA), the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, Virginia will connect infrastructure agencies, workforce development agencies, educators, and employers to advance workforce and training programs in the Commonwealth.

Weaknesses

Virginia's large workforce development ecosystem has historically not easily allowed for a simple determination of a return on investment. The system collects large amounts of data and reports them to federal and state agencies as required by law and regulation. Virginia utilizes the system of record for Titles I and III, the Virginia Workforce Connection, to report federally mandated performance measures. Virginia is in the process of establishing a simple reporting system that could determine the system's progress across all WIOA partners on key indicators, including how many customers of the system got jobs, which system programs are leading customers to getting jobs, how long those individuals remained in those jobs, and what were the wages of those jobs.

In addition, in the next two years, Virginia anticipates large populations of returning citizens who are not prepared to join the workforce to the level the state usually expects because they did not have reliable access to pre-release workforce services. Going forward, the system will work to determine which services are most needed by these populations and how they can be implemented in an effective way before and after their release.

C. State Workforce Development Capacity

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

State Workforce Development Capacity

The Virginia Workforce System currently maintains the capacity to provide services through the activities described in (A), above. Virginia Works, VDOE, VEC, DARS, DBVI, and VDSS are funded sufficiently to provide the required services. Each agency employs sufficient staff to implement required services and needed workforce activities. The same is true for local workforce development areas. Virginia looks to increase this capacity by investing in professional development opportunities for all workforce professionals (as stated in II.c State Strategies). Also, Virginia looks to invest in programs and initiatives that provide services effectively and result in getting Virginians back to work.

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin has established a Chief Transformation Officer for the Commonwealth to collaborate with the Secretary of Labor, Commerce and Trade, Education, Health and Human Resources, Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Veterans and Defense Affairs to determine innovative ways to increase service delivery and effectiveness of the system as a whole. Establishing simple and clear metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the Virginia workforce system will be the first step in further determining the capacity of the workforce system and how to expand that capacity. These clear metrics may include system customers who got jobs, how long those customers stayed in those jobs, and the wages the customers received in those jobs.

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD), the Secretariat of Labor, and the other state agencies supporting workforce development continue to focus on implementing the strategic vision of the Governor of developing and training skilled workers and supporting current, new, and prospective businesses in Virginia.

Virginia has the capacity and the capability to ensure the effective delivery of workforce services and continues to innovate and explore programs and services to support the workforce of the Commonwealth. Investments in workforce development include:

Capacity Investment	Implementation
Commitment to Innovation	In 2022, the Virginia General Assembly established the ability to create College Partnership Laboratory Schools (Lab Schools) to stimulate the development of innovative education programs for preschool through grade 12 students. These public schools, established by higher education institutions, are designed to: • Provide opportunities for innovation in instruction and assessment • Provide teachers with an avenue for delivering innovative instruction and school scheduling, management, and structure • Encourage performance-based educational programs • Establish high standards for both teachers and administrators • Encourage greater collaboration between pre-kindergarten and postsecondary program providers • Develop model programs Lab School models can be tailored to meet the needs of a particular community, or designed to serve certain student populations. So far, Lab Schools have been proposed in five localities across the Commonwealth. Additional information is available at www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/specialized-instruction/laboratory-schools.
Data Driven Decisions	The Virginia Workforce Data Trust was established by the General Assembly in 2010 and expanded in 2021. It provides a central repository replicating all workforce systems of record data allowing comprehensive analysis and reporting across all WIOA programs, regions, and partners. The Data Trust provides visibility for State agencies and regional boards into how a client utilizes resources available to them via the workforce system along with service outcomes. These efforts will be bolstered by the Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant

Expanding Access to Education and Training	The funding provided by the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program place the Commonwealth on track to being one of the first states successfully charting a path to universal access to broadband. Commonwealth Connect, the BEAD five-year plan, shows how Virginia will address the digital divide by providing broadband access, affordability, and adoption. The plan is available at www.dhcd.virginia.gov/bead .
Expanding Access to Education and Training	The Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead (“G3”) tuition assistance program is available to any Virginia resident who qualifies for in-state financial aid and whose family income falls below an identified threshold. G3 can be used for designated programs in five of Virginia’s most in-demand industries: Early Childhood Education, Health Care, Information Technology, Public Safety, and Skilled Trades. Additional information is available at www.virginiag3.com .
Expanding Access to Education and Training	Virginia experienced significant success with the Youth Registered Apprenticeship program (YRA) and work-based learning Registered Apprenticeships (RA) . Students meeting the profile of a Virginia graduate achieve the Commonwealth’s high academic standards and graduate from high school with workplace skills, an understanding of their responsibilities as citizens, and career plans aligned with their talents, interests, and experiences.
Expanding Access to Education and Training	Virginia's 23 community colleges offer more than 220 FastForward training programs which ensure workforce credentials are accessible and affordable for Virginians seeking the skills they need to obtain good-paying jobs in high-demand fields. Residents automatically qualify for program funds upon registration for a Fast Forward-eligible course. Since 2016, more than 52,900 certificates and credentials have been earned. Additional information is available at www.fastforwardva.org .

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Vision

Virginia's nation leading workforce ecosystem will equip Virginians with the skills they need and enable employers to attract, grow, and retain them – ensuring the future of a thriving Commonwealth. In parallel with the stand-up of Virginia Works, we will accelerate the coordination, enhancement, and future-readiness of the Commonwealth's many workforce programs and stakeholders across the government and broader ecosystem through a formal process.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁸ and other populations.⁹

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

Goals

- Goal 1: Prepare Virginia's workers for current and future career pathways that provide competitive wages.
- Goal 2: Deliver just in time workforce services that support business growth in Virginia's leading-edge economy.
- Goal 3: Provide outreach and recruitment services that increase awareness and access to Virginia's workforce development ecosystem.
- Goal 4: Reduce workforce system barriers through dynamic collaboration, coordination, and communication with Virginia Works as the hub-and-spoke model.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

Performance Goals

A template for Virginia's core program performance baselines can be found in Appendix 1. Final performance measures for future years will be negotiated pending final rules, review, and approval by the administering state agency and the governor's office.

4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment, which may include evaluation findings, and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Assessment

Before 2023, Virginia's workforce development system was decentralized across multiple secretariats and agencies. After assessing the system, the Governor's Office and Virginia Secretary of Labor embarked on a major initiative to optimize the entire state system. This initiative resulted in the creation of Virginia Works, the new state agency responsible for workforce development and advancement within the Secretariat of Labor, as of September 2023.

Virginia Works optimizes workforce readiness for Virginia's current and future jobs by positioning workforce development programs to better equip Virginians with the skills they need to meet the employer demand, align job placement with high demand occupations, elevate their experience of getting and remaining employed, and increase their earning power. The optimization plan focused on developing a clear alignment across programs to ensure that major components of the workforce ecosystem work together toward a common goal: moving Virginia into the future of work.

Building off the momentum of the recent Workforce Development Greenhouse Lab, workforce development officials created a dynamic, nation-leading workforce ecosystem hub that proactively connects industry demand with talent capabilities across sectors and regions, all aligned to a shared vision for the future that brings the Governor's bold agenda into fruition.

Key tenets that informed this approach included:

- Confirming a shared definition of what workforce development means for the Commonwealth with common goals and outcomes;
- Balancing centralized strategy and regional flexibility by consolidating some programs and processes across the Commonwealth, while providing guidelines that allow regions to flexibly address their unique worker and employers' needs;
- Holding accountability to meaningful outcomes to align the workforce development system by providing goals, metrics, performance incentives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that encourage programs to stay connected and aligned with employer needs; and
- Sharing data strategy and consolidation between workforce development programs with a centralized portal for data gathering and sharing, while developing a longer-term data and analytics strategy that increases responsiveness and accountability.

The approach was designed to consider three simultaneous dimensions: looking inward at the workforce development infrastructure and policies; looking outward at the legislative, budgetary, and ecosystem engagement strategy; and looking forward to the technology and data transformation that is required to implement consequential change.

In between these large-scale evaluations, Virginia uses a number of strategies to assess the overall effectiveness of our workforce development system, including performance evaluation and continuous improvement strategies at the state and local system levels, at the plan implementation level, and at the program level.

Virginia uses a combination of policy levers to ensure an effective evaluation and feedback mechanism to drive system improvements. Code of Virginia §2.2-214.3 delineates the

workforce responsibilities of the Secretary of Labor. This legislation established several evaluation opportunities and assessment mandates for Virginia's workforce system.

The Secretary of Labor is required to:

- Conduct annual evaluations of the performance of workforce development and training programs and activities and their administrators and providers, using the performance measures developed through the strategic planning process. The evaluations shall include, to the extent feasible:
 - A comparison of the per-person costs for each program or activity
 - A comparative rating of each program or activity based on its success in meeting program objectives
 - An explanation of the extent to which each agency's appropriation requests incorporate the data reflected in the cost comparison described in clause (i) and the comparative rating described in clause (ii)
- Submit biennial reports, which shall be included in the governor's executive budget submissions to the General Assembly, on improvements in the coordination of workforce development efforts statewide. The reports shall identify:
 - Program success rates in relation to performance measures established by the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD)
 - Obstacles to program and resource coordination
 - Strategies for facilitating statewide program and resource coordination
- Establish measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the local workforce development boards and conduct annual evaluations of the effectiveness of each local workforce development board. As part of the evaluation process, the Governor shall recommend to such board specific best management practices;

In addition, according to Code of Virginia §2.2-2472, the VBWD is required to:

- Evaluate the extent to which the state's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs and labor market statistics, and report the findings of this analysis to the governor every two years
- Conduct a review of budgets, which must be submitted annually to the Board by each agency conducting federal and state funded career and technical and adult education and workforce development programs that identify the agency's sources and expenditures of administrative, workforce education and training, and support services for workforce development programs.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

How These Strategies Were Developed

The Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Public Policy in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs facilitated conversations with representatives from the Office of the Governor, Office of the Secretary of Labor, the VBWD, Virginia Works, VEC, VDOE, VDSS, DARS, DBVI, and LWDAs to collaboratively develop strategies for implementing workforce development programs in Virginia for the next four years. These strategies were developed to be consistent with the key priorities outlined in the Training and Employment Guidance Letter NO. 4-23 released October 31, 2023. These priorities are:

- Leveraging historic infrastructure investments
- Investments that prepare workers for quality jobs
- Data-driven decisions
- Investing in youth
- Equity in service delivery and educational programming
- Enhance supportive service offerings
- Strategic partnering

Strategies for PYs 2024-2027

Goal 1: Prepare Virginia's workers for current and future career pathways that provide competitive wages.

Strategies:

- *Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future:* Establish the Virginia Works hub-and-spoke model to strengthen the connections between Virginia's education and workforce systems and the coordination and collaboration amongst Virginia's workforce development investments.
- *Meet workers where they are:* Optimize outcome-driven service delivery to respond to the needs of current and future job seekers, including youth.
- *Decide using data:* Measure job placement rates, retention, and progressed wage growth of job seekers to determine program effectiveness and performance over time.
- *Scale what works:* Advance programs and services with proven success that empower both the unemployed and underemployed to obtain careers in both today's and tomorrow's economy.
- *Focus on jobs in high demand occupations:* Connect Virginia's businesses and employers with educators throughout curriculum design and implementation of career pathways, credentialing priorities, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities that align with the needs of targeted sectors.
- *Build system capacity:* Expand professional development of workforce professionals, career counselors, and educators to evolve alongside business and individual needs and equip all with an understanding of Virginia's high demand occupations.
- *Invest in Virginia:* Collaborate with state transportation and infrastructure agencies on human capital planning efforts to outline how Virginia can address workforce needs using the investments provided by the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) and other funding sources.

Goal 2: Deliver just-in-time workforce services that support business growth in Virginia's leading-edge economy.

Strategies:

- *Meet businesses where they are:* Leverage state and local Business Solutions Teams and Virginia's high demand occupations list to identify the needs of employers in real time, e.g., SWaM organizations.
- *Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future:* Partner with Virginia's businesses and employers to advance work-based learning opportunities, including for youth, to support sector growth.
- *Decide using data:* Measure outcomes for employers using workforce services to determine program effectiveness, performance over time, and opportunities for improvement.
- *Scale what works:* Build and deploy sector strategies that engage businesses and economic development partners to address business needs efficiently.
- *Focus on jobs in high demand occupations:* Train to the needs of businesses to align the skill-building of Virginia's talent supply with the needs of targeted sectors.

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- *Build system capacity:* Expand professional development of Business Solutions Teams to be responsive to employer needs.
 - *Invest in Virginia:* Convene businesses and education providers to coordinate strategies leading to winning federal grants provided under the CHIPS and Science Act.

Goal 3: Provide outreach and recruitment services that increase awareness and access to Virginia’s workforce development ecosystem.

Strategies:

- *Recalibrate Virginia’s workforce development ecosystem for the future:* Implement outreach strategies that communicate how Virginia Works for everyone and specific campaigns targeted to customer groups or programs (i.e., youth, work-based learning).
- *Meet customers where they are:* Promote workforce services provided through community-orientated access points, e.g., public libraries.
- *Decide using data:* Communicate the outcomes and benefits associated with receiving services from across the Virginia Works ecosystem to targeted customer groups.
- *Scale what works:* Increase communication throughout the workforce ecosystem to promote apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities to targeted customer groups.
- *Focus on jobs in high-demand occupations:* Strengthen engagement with state and local economic development partners to promote how Virginia Works for businesses.
- *Build system capacity:* Use data and technology, including the Workforce Data Trust and the high-demand occupations list, to make workforce services more accessible and responsive to all customers.
- *Invest in Virginia:* Encourage the creation of new Registered Apprenticeship programs by focusing business outreach on the benefits provided by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and other funding sources.

Goal 4: Reduce workforce system barriers through dynamic collaboration, coordination, and communication with Virginia Works as the hub-and-spoke model.

Strategies:

- *Recalibrate Virginia’s workforce development ecosystem for the future:* Drive coordination and connection between Virginia’s education and workforce systems to improve labor force participation and educational attainment.
- *Meet customers where they are:* Implement the Virginia Works ambition for a next generation integrated digital entry point across the Commonwealth’s workforce services and programs.

- *Decide using data:* Analyze labor market data to assess disparities in outcomes and develop solutions that increase opportunities for underserved populations.
- *Scale what works:* Leverage discretionary funds and support leading-edge initiatives to remove barriers to employment (e.g., affordable childcare, transportation, housing).
- *Focus on jobs in high demand occupations:* Collaborate across the workforce development ecosystem to identify and address barriers for job seekers and businesses to accessing work-based learning programs.
- *Build system capacity:* Work with Local Workforce Development Boards to engage non-traditional, non-mandatory programs targeting youth as service delivery partners.
- *Invest in Virginia:* Use the funding provided by the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program to make transformational investments into broadband affordability and adoption across the Commonwealth.

III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the

State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

State Board Functions

The VBWD is a business-led board that acts as the principal advisor to the Governor. The Board provides strategic leadership, direction, and oversight to the workforce development system and its efforts to create a strong workforce aligned with business needs.

Governance

The Board is appointed by the Governor and includes a diverse representation of members from across the Commonwealth. The majority of the Board is comprised of private sector business leaders (including the chairperson) from a wide variety of industries. Also included are state and local elected officials, Cabinet-level officials from various agencies who deliver and direct workforce services and programs, and representatives of the workforce itself,

including labor organizations and community-based organizations that serve populations with barriers to employment.

The Board is led by an executive director and supported by a staff director and a staff person from each agency or department that receives workforce training dollars. Supplementing that staff cohort is the lead policy analyst for workforce, who is a member of the governor's workforce team. The Board executive director is supervised by the Secretary of Labor

Decision Making Process

The VBWD is committed to transparency in its work and has bylaws that reflect its intentions related to sharing information regarding meetings and activities with the public subject to provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Board is required to meet at least quarterly. The Board's open meetings make information regarding the activities of the Board available to the public. This information includes its work plan and historical record of minutes and presentations, which are available at www.virginiacareerworks.com/board.

To comply with state "sunshine provisions," the Board and any subcommittee authorized to take official action on behalf of the Board must do the following:

1. Take official action and engage in deliberations only at meetings open to the public. "Official action" includes making recommendations, establishing policy, making decisions, and/or voting on matters of Board business. "Deliberations" are discussions of Board business necessary to reach decisions.
2. Ensure that all meetings are held in an accessible location for individuals with disabilities and that all information is provided in accessible and alternate formats.
3. Give public notice of meetings in accordance with applicable state code provisions, including public notice in advance of any special meeting or rescheduled regular meeting.
4. Ensure that votes of Board members be publicly cast and, in the case of roll call votes, recorded.
5. Keep written minutes of all public meetings, including date, time and place of the meeting, members present, the substance of all official actions, a record of roll call votes, and the names of any citizens who appeared and gave testimony.

All members of the Board serve a public interest and trust role and have a clear obligation to conduct all affairs in a manner consistent with this concept. All decisions of the Board are to be based on promoting the best interest of the state and the public good. Accordingly, all members of the Board are subject to the provisions of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act.

Each Board member files a financial disclosure statement with the Virginia Ethics Commission as a condition of assuming membership and then, annually while serving as a Board member. Any Board member with a potential or actual conflict of interest must disclose that fact to the Board as soon as the potential conflict is discovered and, to the extent possible, before the agenda for the meeting involving the matter at issue is prepared.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future: Virginia Works

Virginia has created a new agency responsible for the coordination and performance measurement of workforce development programs across the Commonwealth. This new agency, Virginia Works, will align the efforts of statewide workforce development programs under the strategies outlined in this Plan.

The guiding principles of Virginia Works are:

- Coordinated service delivery that is easily accessible to all Virginians
- Best-in-class centralized data collection to inform decision-making
- Agile, innovative, and responsive system and programs to address both the state and local workforce needs
- Consistent, transparent, and standardized metrics to measure program success
- Single entry point, "no wrong door" approach to connect employers and job seekers to opportunities
- Responsive to employer and job seeker needs – customer-focused in every way
- Business and industry involved in training and curriculum development

Virginia Works partners closely with the Department of Education (VDOE), the Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS), the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), and the Department of Social Services (VDSS) to implement the core programs and Plan partner programs.

Meet customers where they are: Integrated service delivery, co-enrollment, youth programs

Through strategic co-location, collaboration, and coordination, Virginia Works will provide expedient and effective assistance through a "no wrong door" approach. Customers can access workforce services through virtual means as well as through in-person offerings at our One-stop centers. Our core program partners are co-located at all comprehensive One-stops to ensure services are aligned to serve customer needs.

Through co-enrollment, customers receive just-in-time services while experiencing as little burden as possible in the enrollment process. Customers enroll in Title I and III services through the Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC), which serves as the system of record for

employment services information. The VaWC is used by partners to co-enroll individuals into WIOA programs and services that provide employment services, education, and job training. Virginia implemented co-enrollment with the implementation of VBWD Policy 19-01: WIOA Title I and Trade Adjustment Assistance ACT (TAA) Co-Enrollment, which can be found at [www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy .pdf](http://www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy.pdf). The VBWD plans to update this policy to include co-enrollment for additional programs.

Virginia Works, VDOE, DARS, DVBI, and VEC workforce professionals meet regularly to communicate priorities, solve problems, and continually provide services to customers. Additionally, state and local VDSS professionals are also included in these meetings to maximize coordination in how they provide wrap-around services to qualifying customers. These regular meetings, as well as the meetings of the local and state workforce boards, allow partners to communicate opportunities and challenges and adjust to service delivery when needed.

To effectively engage youth, the local workforce development boards (LWDBs) have youth committees whose activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide information and assisting with planning, operational oversight, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth
- Recommend policy direction to the local board for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth
- Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system
- Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth
- Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers
- Provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs

The electronic document imaging and storage system, a feature in VaWC, allows LWDBs to broaden their outreach and recruitment efforts by providing the capability to conduct and complete youth eligibility remotely, and further provide access to the out of school youth (OSY) population that traditionally would not come into the One-stop centers.

Decide using data: Performance metrics and strategic planning

The legislation that established Virginia Works also mandated a comprehensive approach to performance metrics and measures across all workforce development programs Commonwealth-wide. Virginia Works has launched a detailed and holistic initiative to gather baseline and ongoing data around six key metrics for all programs to assess how effectively programs serve customers and identify opportunities for improvement. This effort is designed to allow program owners and Commonwealth stakeholders to see performance trends over time and paint a complete picture of Virginia's workforce investments. Measured

across 60+ workforce development programs administered by 21 agencies, these metrics include:

- Total number of people trained
- Total number of job placements
- Total program cost
- Program cost per participant
- Progressed wage growth
- Job retention rate

In addition, Virginia Works partners with other agencies to implement the Workforce Data Trust, a cloud-based, open-source integration platform developed with funding from a U.S. Department of Labor System Integration grant. The data trust – as well as a growing suite of associated applications and analytic tools – are overseen by the Virginia Workforce Data Governance Board, an entity chaired by Virginia’s Chief Data Officer and comprised of agencies contributing financial and data resources to support the collaborative environment. The agencies currently sharing data include Virginia Works, VDOE, VEC, DARS, DBVI, VDSS, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC), the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the Virginia Department of Veteran Services (DVS).

The alignment and common goals provided by the Workforce Data Trust support the provision of effective just-in-time services to all customers.

Scale what works: Affirmative referrals

To provide those just-in-time services, workforce professionals make sure customers are referred to the eligible programs that provide the services they need. This positive handoff and return is called affirmative referral, and Virginia’s workforce system implement this outcome-focused approach to customer service.

Partner agencies use customer relations management tools and other tracking mechanisms to ensure that customers move smoothly and fruitfully through the workforce development system. Delivery of effective and efficient customer service is the central goal that aligns all workforce partners.

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: Business Service Teams

Each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) is required to have a Business Services Team (BST) responsible for driving local sector strategies, providing local employers with human resources solutions, and identifying methods to reduce regional skills gaps. BSTs are cross-agency, cross-programmatic groups comprised at the discretion of local workforce leaders that include representatives from each of the core partner agencies and several optional partners, as appropriate. These teams provide a comprehensive array of services to businesses to maximize the efficiency and expertise of system partners.

Build system capacity: Collaboration on discrete grant activity

Across Virginia's workforce system, partner agencies are engaged in operationalizing several workforce initiatives stemming from grants obtained from the federal government for specific workforce innovations. These grants include:

- *PATHWAYS to Careers Using Partnerships, Apprenticeships, and Equity grant*– This five-year, \$9 million grant will assist Virginians with disabilities in acquiring skills-based training and RAs in high-wage, high-demand fields, including STEM and state government. Collaborating agencies are DARS, DBVI, Virginia Works, and the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM).
- *State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula grant* – This U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOL ETA) grant increases Virginia's ability to serve, improve, and strategically expand RA programs and pre-apprenticeships. Virginia aims to expand and diversify state RA programs in industries including advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, infrastructure and clean energy, education, and healthcare.
- *Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant* – This DOL ETA grant will enable Virginia to develop and enhance databases to analyze programs that provide workforce training and employment services. Collaborating agencies include Virginia Works and VCCS.
- *Youth Outreach & Transportation to Learn grant* - The intent of these youth workforce development initiatives is to increase the number and quality of outreach programs used by LWDBs and other organizations to connect students to skilled trade areas available in Virginia. These activities increase student, parents, and counselors' awareness of the education and training needed to pursue these career pathways. Examples of activities include guest speakers, career days, career fairs, field trips, workplace tours, and presentations about various skilled trades career pathways.
- *Other grant partnerships* - Newport News Shipbuilding/The Apprentice School, along with Jobs for the Future (JFF), are partnered in a grant that was awarded by DOL ETA. They were selected to be the Registered Apprenticeship Technical Assistance Center of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion (D&I Center). This grant will be focused on expanding RA in all industries with a focus on D & I. This initiative can easily dovetail with the PATHWAYS Grant.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Partner Reimbursement Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants awarded to LWDBs through VDSS.

B. Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future: Coordination with other workforce programs

Virginia Works collaborates closely with program partners not included in this Plan to provide just-in-time services to customers and to provide solutions to Virginia's workforce challenges. A sample of the programs administered by other agencies that are aligned partners in this Plan includes:

DBVI

- Learning Excellence in Academic Programs (LEAP)
- Learning Independence Feeling Empowered (LIFE)

LEAP is a five-week program that gives rising high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to assess their college-readiness skills. Additional information about LEAP is available at www.dbvi.virginia.gov/documents/LEAP_Brochure.pdf. LIFE is a four-week residential training program that provides basic training in the skills of blindness and advocacy. Additional information about LIFE is available at www.vrcbvi.virginia.gov/programs.htm. Title IV leadership in DBVI regularly collaborates with the LEAP and LIFE leadership in DBVI and one-stop service providers to align the implementation of their respective programs where appropriate.

VDOE

- Microsoft IT Program
- Path to Industry Certification
- PluggedIn Virginia
- Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment

VDOE offers the above skills training programs and assessments that connect education-seekers to career pathways. Additional information on the Path to Industry Certification is available at www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte/industry-credentialing. Additional information on PluggedIn Virginia is available at www.ietblueprint.com/pluggedinva.

Title II leadership in VDOE regularly collaborates with the leadership of the above programs in VDOE and one-stop service providers to align the implementation of their respective programs where appropriate. In addition to co-enrollment within WIOA programs, many participants are enrolled in the above programs while they are also enrolled in Title II programs.

VDSS

- Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program
- Great Expectations Community College Tuition Grant
- Community Action Agencies

Virginia's Refugee Resettlement Program connects eligible refugees with support services. Additional information on the Refugee Resettlement Program is available at www.dss.virginia.gov/printer/family/ons/services.cgi. Great Expectations provides tuition grants to those who were in foster care, in the custody of a social services agency, or in a special needs adoption at the time of their high school graduation or GED completion. Additional information on Great Expectations is available at www.dss.virginia.gov/fmf/educational.html.

The Virginia workforce program leadership team includes VDSS leadership so that the above programs are included as a part of workforce program implementation and collaboration across the Commonwealth.

VCCS

- Institutes of Excellence
- Non-Credit Workforce Training

VCCS regularly collaborates with the leadership of the above programs and one-stop service providers to align the implementation of their respective programs where appropriate. In addition to co-enrollment within WIOA programs, many participants are enrolled in the above programs while they are also enrolled in Title I programs.

Virginia sees secondary career and technical education (CTE) and training as vital and relevant in the development of students. Virginia's CTE program provides a statewide system of career pathways that brings together secondary, postsecondary, workforce development, and employers. These partnerships focus on high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations that strengthen the economy. Using a statewide career clusters model, the state ensures delivery of modern, rigorous, and flexible programs that offer global competitiveness.

Invest in Virginia: Federal investment partners

Virginia Works will collaborate with additional partners not included in this Plan to incorporate and align federal infrastructure investments into Virginia's workforce development priorities. A sample of these partners includes:

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

- Human capital planning efforts using the transportation and public infrastructure investments provided by the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA)

Virginia Energy

- Training for Residential Energy Contracts (TREC) program funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

Virginia Alliance for Semiconductor Technology (VAST)

- Semiconductor career certification program in alignment with the CHIPS and Science Act. Additional information is available at www.vast-alliance.org.

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program workforce development planning. Additional information is available at www.dhcd.virginia.gov/bead.

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

- Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High Speed Rail workforce development planning, as funded by the IIJA. Additional information is available at www.drpt.virginia.gov/work/virginia-north-carolina-interstate-high-speed-rail-compact

Scale what works: Work-based learning

Virginia Works will collaborate with our Plan partners to expand the use of the work-based learning programs to help narrow the skills gap. Virginia's RA programs are administered by Virginia Works through a network of regional service offices and technical outreach staff. At the LWDA level, BSTs are the organizing structure used to engage employers and deliver workforce services to industry partners. RA representatives are vital members of the local BSTs and also work in partnership with other system partners (e.g., DARS and VDOE). Virginia Works and the local BSTs collaborate to identify RA opportunities.

RA consultants located in field offices throughout the Commonwealth collaborate with one-stop partners and employers to establish and expand RA programs. The Virginia strategy for RA service design and delivery involves referrals from workforce partners (e.g., workforce centers, case managers from DARS, VDSS, and VCCS) to Virginia Works or to the RA Consultant that serves that locality. Making and receiving referrals for program participants, participating in joint engagement efforts, and participating in business services activities at the local level are all ways in which RA aligns its activities with other workforce partners. Consistent follow-up by the LWDA ensures that quality work-based training needs of both the employer and the participant are met.

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: High demand occupations list

The Code of Virginia § 2.2-2472 requires the VBWD to publish a biennial list of jobs, trades, and professions for which high demand for qualified workers exists or is projected. The Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) collaborated with the VBWD and other stakeholders to develop the list. This list is publicized all across the workforce development ecosystem, including One-stop centers, to coordinate education and training programs offered at the local level.

The High Demand Occupations Dashboard is a user-friendly tool designed to provide access to the High Demand Occupations List and core labor market data for all Virginia occupations. It offers vital information such as current employment, median annual earnings, average annual openings, and a five-year workforce projection for each occupation. Users have the flexibility to tailor the data to their region by selecting a LWDA or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and can further refine their search based on specific career clusters, pathways, and entry-level education requirements. The Dashboard is available at <https://voee->

tableau.link/views/VOEE2024HighDemandOccupations/HighDemand?%3Aembed=y&%3AsGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y.

Aligning with Programs Identified in (A)

Workforce professionals working in the programs identified in (A) collaborate and align with the workforce professionals described in this section by working under the same vision, goals, and priorities and regularly providing one another with updates on service delivery. Professionals that work on different programs under the same agency report to the same leadership for unified direction and ways to avoid duplication of services.

The establishment of Virginia Works further reduces the duplication of services by aligning more workforce development programs within the same agency. For example, Title I and Title III programs were previously in different agencies and now both report to the Director of Virginia Works. This arrangement mirrors the co-location of Titles I and III programs in the One-stop centers. Also, Virginia uses the Workforce Data Trust to collect all workforce development data to measure the performance of the whole ecosystem. Further, this cohesive hub-and-spoke ecosystem model brings greater connection between the workforce and education systems. This coordinated approach has broken down silos between workforce and education programs and aligned them to a unified purpose.

In addition, state level programs listed in this section communicate with one-stop operators to inform them of resources available for customers that can be aligned with services provided at the local level. Virginia will pursue engaging other organizations in workforce initiatives, particularly those that serve special populations and/or individuals with barriers to employment, including youth and returning citizens.

C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g., transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future: Coordination to provide services

Integral to our One-stop centers is a streamlined, just-in-time service delivery model shared by all partners that uses common intake and assessment processes, common performance metrics, and universal professional development for front line providers of career and supportive services. This service delivery model allows for the coordination of activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services to all customers. Additionally, Virginia's affirmative referral model for customer service allows customers to receive "warm hand-offs" and progress monitoring as they move through the

workforce system. The VBWD policy on the Provision of Supportive Services is available at www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-401-05-Change-1-Provision-of-Supportive-Services.pdf.

At the state level, representatives from each of the core programs – as well as SNAP and TANF, higher education, and career and technical education – are working together to coordinate services to individuals and create career pathways to high-demand jobs. One continuing example of this collaboration is the work developing and implementing sector strategies. This effort aligns education and training programs in ways that make it easier for individuals to access and complete pathways to family-supporting careers. By pairing sector strategies with career pathways, this initiative intends to improve the relevance and effectiveness of education and training programs, leading to more positive outcomes for individuals and businesses.

This effort seeks to strengthen the leadership capacity of workforce system partners and training providers, as well as incorporate sector partnerships and career pathways strategies as integral components in every Virginia region. Additionally, with integrated education and training (IET) as an established programming model, Virginia's adult education program has scaled up the IET requirements of WIOA with other training and service providers, and has become an expectation of service delivery in other discretionary grants.

Meet workers where they are: Overcoming barriers to employment

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program is an integral component of Virginia's implementation of WIOA. AEFLA providers are investing in six major state priorities:

- Developing and delivering a career pathway model
- Ensuring the availability of correctional education in every region
- Offering integrated education and training opportunities
- Collaborating to provide service to those with low levels of literacy
- Realizing the full implementation of standards-based instruction
- Integrating workforce preparation activities in all programming types

These priorities support Plan strategies to eliminate barriers to employment. Regional adult education administrators serve on local workforce boards and committees, and as such, they are actively engaged in decision-making about local implementation of the state strategies and enacting an integrated service delivery approach for shared clients.

Additionally, assistive technology is a supportive service that can help individuals of all ages and abilities acquire the appropriate, affordable assistive and information technologies and services needed to substitute for functions lost through disability, or to supplement/enhance existing functions to expand employment and independent living opportunities. DARS administers the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS). VATS is a statewide program authorized and funded by the Assistive Technology Act of 2004. VATS was established to

increase awareness, accessibility, and acquisition of assistive technology. VATS contracts with the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.) to provide Durable Medical Equipment (DME) collection and re-assignment programs in all four regions of the Commonwealth served by DARS. Customers can be referred to assistive technology services through online services and by visiting One-stop centers around the Commonwealth. The VBWD policy on the provision of Services to Individuals with Disabilities is available at www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-600-03-Services-to-Individuals-with-Disabilities-Change-1.pdf.

The integrated service delivery, co-enrollment, common screening, affirmative referrals, and generally collaboration discussed in (A) demonstrate the methods used to coordinate the delivery of comprehensive services to all customers, especially those with disabilities. Customers can access services virtually or in-person and be enrolled in their qualifying services that day or within just a few business days. A common intake system allows the customer's information to be shared with core and one-stop partners to quickly determine which services each customer needs and connects them with workforce professionals who can deliver those services to them.

In addition, Virginia provides affiliate One-stop centers around the Commonwealth to increase accessibility for customers living in remote areas. Current efforts to expand broadband services to all corners of the state through the BEAD program will increase access to virtual services for all customers.

Further, Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERS) are fully integrated into the One-stop centers and work hand in hand with WIOA staff to ensure priority of service to veterans. one-stop staff conduct the necessary triage to identify eligible veterans, eligible persons, and other populations designated by the U.S. Secretary of Labor. Services are provided to them according to their needs. LVERS provide a unified community process that advances employment opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. LVERS connect these customers to opportunities in their area so that they may find employment with businesses in their local areas. Opportunities available to transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses include:

- Employer hiring events
- Employability workshops
- Job interview, resume, and employment application assistance
- Occupational skills assessments
- Technology resources
- Education and training opportunities
- Occupational certificates and credentials

Finally, LVERS identify any barriers to employment for their customers and connect customers to the appropriate resources.

Scale what works: Advance programs and services with proven success

To further the goals of providing effective services to customers, Virginia evaluates program and service success according to six key metrics:

- Total number of people trained
- Total number of job placements
- Total program cost
- Program cost per participant
- Progressed wage growth
- Job retention rate

Collecting and reporting this data across the ecosystem allows for the identification of programs or services that require additional investment to ensure comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services are provided.

D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future: Alignment of education and workforce development systems

Central to Virginia's cohesive hub-and-spoke ecosystem model is the alignment of the education and workforce development systems. In this model, the education system provides students with the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities they need based on their chosen career pathway.

Virginia ensures high-quality services to employers by involving them in the design of curriculum for the training programs of the career pathways needed for their business. Virginia has received feedback in the past that job seekers who completed training programs did not always demonstrate those necessary skills when hired by businesses. By aligning the training program to the needs of businesses and involving employers in the curriculum development process, Virginia's employers will be able to hire more qualified job seekers.

The high demand occupations list is another way to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers. When education and training providers align their programs to meet the training needs of the occupations on this list, employers can expect an increase in qualified job seekers. The High Demand Occupations Dashboard allows employers to tailor the data to their region, career clusters, pathways, and entry-level education requirements to better understand the labor market data that applies to them. The Dashboard is available at www.voee-

tableau.link/views/VOEE2024HighDemandOccupations/HighDemand?%3Aembed=y&%3AsGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y.

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: Business Services Teams

Each LWDA is required to have a BST whose responsibility is to drive sector strategies within a locality, provide local employers with human resources solutions, and identify methods to shrink regional skills gaps. BSTs are cross-agency, cross-programmatic groups comprised, at the discretion of local workforce leaders, of representatives from each of the core partner agencies, as well as several optional partners, including economic development professionals. These teams provide a comprehensive array of services to businesses to maximize the efficiency and expertise of the system partners. The Business Services Requirements Policy 403-01, Change 1 can be found at www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-403-01-Business-Services-Requirements-Change-1.pdf.

The composition of the state-level BST shall include business services leadership from:

- Virginia Works
- VDOE
- VEC
- DARS
- DBVI
- DOC
- VEDP
- VDSS
- DVS
- A LWDB Executive Director
- Representative with a leadership role from a local BST (e.g., local business service team coordinator)
- A business member from a LWDA (will be selected annually)
- A business member from the VBWD
- A State Labor Federations representative from the VBWD

LWDB are encouraged to create a methodology that maximizes the opportunities for businesses to create a relationship with One-stop centers. Each partner agency in the one-stop has statutory requirements for creating relationships with businesses and assisting clients receiving services through their funding in finding employment opportunities. All members of the business services teams are expected to create these relationships with businesses in the community in a coordinated and targeted manner.

The following minimum standards are required and must be evident and practiced in the delivery of services to business customers in each LWDB. The state-level BST will facilitate the solutions to ensure these standards are implemented.

-
1. The LWDA one-stop Operations Partner Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) shall identify the role of each partner and reflect the strategic goals of the LWDA for business services as identified in the WIOA local plan. The agreement must include:
 - a. Standardized timeframes to respond to business inquiries and subsequent contact to deliver specialized and collaborative solutions to meet business customer needs. Alternative options must be provided if the LWDA cannot provide an affirmative response to the business customer's initial request.
 - b. The LWDA will implement a business satisfaction tool agreed upon by the state level BST to assist in demonstrating continuous improvement
 2. LWDA business service partners must have clear, convenient, and easily accessible content and outreach materials (including web-based content) for business customers that provides:
 - a. A list of all business products and services
 - b. Contact information for a business to contact through the identified "single point of contact" protocol
 3. BSTs will document they are working and making progress towards shared goals

Business Services for the LWDBs will be evaluated using the following metrics:

- A shared vision and strategy for business services shall be included in the Virginia Career Works MOU and signed by all active partners
- A single point of contact protocol documented in the Virginia Career Works MOU
- A Written Communication Plan shall be included in the Virginia Career Works MOU
 - A unified approach and message that is focused on the workforce system instead of a program specific approach
 - An outreach plan based on sector strategies identified in the local plan
 - Identification of locally available resources and channels for outreach and how they will be used
 - The role of each partner in performing outreach activities
 - A method for determining how effective outreach efforts have been locally
 - A description of additional partnerships to assist in communications and outreach to businesses including business roundtables, business advisory councils, or existing business visitation programs through economic development entities
 - Standardized timeframes to respond to business inquiries and subsequent contact, in order to deliver specialized and collaborative solutions to meet business customer needs

- A policy or procedure shall be established to ensure partner staff within the Virginia Career Works are aware of the procedure for business services referral
- A method to collect Business Services satisfaction data based on criteria and tool to be provided by the State WIOA Title I Administrator
- The website must include standard point of contact protocol including updated contact information for businesses and list of business services available within the LWDA

To assist with the oversight, enhancing, and providing continuous improvement to business services provided in Virginia a statewide BST. The team consists of all the mandated partners from this Plan and members of the VBWD to represent business and labor.

In addition, BSTs collaborate with LVERS to connect local businesses with transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses who wish to live and work in the local area.

Decide using data: Labor market information

Actionable labor market information is provided by Virginia Works Economic Information and Analytics (EIA) group. Their work ensures that quality data is available for state, regional, and local system partners to evaluate the needs of priority targeted industry sectors, to understand short- and long-term demand by occupation, and to access critical employer recruiting activity information. This information is accessible through the virtual one-stop at www.virginiaworks.com.

E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future: Collaboration with educational institutions

Virginia has taken a fully integrated and comprehensive approach to ensure that publicly funded training activity supports the goals of the workforce system, individuals, and businesses. These education and training institutions become vital points of access for individuals seeking workforce system services.

Central to Virginia's strategy to engage educational institutions as they align workforce training and education programs to employer needs is the Workforce Credentials Grant (WCG) program that has been established in the Code of Virginia and fully funded by state General Funds. This program, called Fast Forward, supplements the federally funded

workforce development programs by providing incentives to individuals to complete training and obtain credentials in in-demand jobs. Additional information is available at www.fastforwardva.org.

The VBWD has the responsibility to identify in-demand occupations and the credentials required to attain them. The Board supports smarter investments in workforce development that helps to grow the state economy and close skills gaps while providing Virginians with a pathway to the middle class.

Scale what works: CTE planning and program alignment

To increase engagement with CTE in the regions, LWDBs are required to have at least one representative from a local school division represent CTE on their board. VDOE has made efforts to increase the collaboration between the boards and CTE programs, and has directed their CTE directors to include local board members in their advisory committees. Furthermore, CTE directors are involved in the development of sector strategies, joining regional training events, and contributing to virtual workgroups.

VCCS provides primary oversight for postsecondary Perkins and the implementation of CTE programs in the 23 colleges located on 40 campuses across the Commonwealth. The principal objective to provide and maintain a system of comprehensive community colleges through which appropriate educational opportunities and programs, to accomplish the purposes set forth in the Code of Virginia, shall be made available throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, each college in the VCCS has a local board. The purpose of each local College Board is to keep the community colleges responsive to the needs of their service areas.

According to VCCS policy, CTE programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts-persons for employment in many industries and businesses. These programs, which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural; business; engineering; health and medical; industrial; service; and other technical/occupational fields. The curriculum is planned primarily to meet the need for workers in the regions served by the community colleges, but VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the Commonwealth in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

All community colleges maintain a workforce development division headed by a vice president, dean, or director who is charged with analyzing and addressing business and industry needs for a skilled workforce within the college's local service area. These workforce leaders work collaboratively within the institution to plan, develop, and maintain occupational/technical education programs at the colleges. Curriculum advisory committees consist of representatives from business, industry, and labor. The committees work to keep courses and programs relevant to the workplace and to provide students and faculty with relevant career entry requirements. Experiential learning through registered apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education, service, and project-based learning provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context.

Through publicly funded programs like FastForward (WCG), Virginia's Community Colleges collaborate with workforce partners to provide career development activities, integrated education and training, coaching and advising, and supportive services to students and clients of Title I, Title II, DARS, and VDSS programs. This collaboration aligns the goals of workforce development, shares resources, and capitalizes on the strengths of workforce partners.

Scale what works: Youth Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships

Virginia is looking to expand opportunities for youth to participate in work-based learning and credential attainment programs. Virginia already has 34 school divisions participating in Youth Registered Apprenticeships (YRA) that integrate CTE curriculum with real job experiences. Participants complete at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training before getting their journeyworker certificate. High school students who are already enrolled in CTE programs at their school typically get started as apprentices in their junior or senior year. YRA participants receive:

- Exposure to industry with high-demand career
- Paid employment
- Opportunity for college credit
- Mentorship from a master in the field
- Safety education

Virginia Works collaborates with LWDBs to facilitate peer to peer webinars showcasing their local area youth program design and shared individual best practices including pre-apprenticeship under the work experience program element. Virginia Works will continue to provide yearly regional training and program monitoring to ensure the LWDBs understand the components of a registered apprenticeship program that includes the following elements:

- Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region involved
- Access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly
- Hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, and understanding how the skills acquired through coursework can be applied toward a future career
- Opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential
- A partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs that assists in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship program in a registered apprenticeship program

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: Lab Schools

Virginia is leveraging state and local investments for workforce development programs that focus on the future of work. One example is the College Partnership Laboratory Schools (Lab Schools) established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2022. These public schools

stimulate the development of innovative education programs for preschool through grade 12 students. Five Lab Schools have been proposed so far.

One of them is the CodeRVA Regional High School, which aims to prepare a diverse population of students for college and careers in computer science through personalized, integrated, and applied learning. CodeRVA uses blended and project-based learning to develop students' self-management skills while integrating academic content, agile workplace methodologies, and internship experiences that provide a pipeline of critical thinkers prepared to enter college or Richmond's growing tech sector. Students enter CodeRVA via a lottery system designed to remove admission barriers and create a student body representative of the Richmond region. Students graduate with a Virginia high school diploma, an Associate Degree from VCCS, industry certifications, and as many as 360 hours or more of practical information technology work experience. Additional information is available at www.coderva.org and www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/specialized-instruction/laboratory-schools.

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: State Council on Higher Education in Virginia alignment

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for higher education. SCHEV makes budget and policy recommendations to the governor and the General Assembly, coordinates initiatives across public two-year and four-year institutions, and maintains student-level data for policy and research. SCHEV leads a statewide strategic plan for higher education in Virginia - The Virginia Plan for Higher Education - with the objective of becoming the best-educated state by 2030. Key elements of the plan that relate to workforce include:

1. Recognizing all credentials of value (industry credentials, certificates, and apprenticeships) and not just degrees
2. Providing affordable access to higher education for all through further alignment and leveraging of state and federal resources
3. Tracking outcomes of students, including the average wages over time and the percent of students that earn competitive wages three years after completing a program

Additional information on this strategic plan is available at www.schev.edu/research-publications/strategic-plan.

Eligible Training Provider List

The state workforce board adopted an expansive policy allowing institutions that are exempt from certification by SCHEV to participate as an eligible training provider. This policy is available for review at: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-404-01-Change-1-ETPL-Policy-Approved.pdf.

Five categories of providers may apply for inclusion on the state eligible training provider list:

1. A postsecondary educational institution that is eligible to receive federal funds under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that provides a program that leads to certification or license or college certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree.
2. A postsecondary school that offers formal instructional programs with curricula designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or its equivalent. Such schools include programs of academic-vocational, vocational, and continuing professional education that may lead to a certification or licensure. This category excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.
3. An entity that carries out related instruction under the National Apprenticeship Act that is recognized by Virginia Works. See RAP section for additional information on how RAPs may opt in to the ETPL.
4. A provider of a program of occupational training services that under Section 23.1-219 of the Code of Virginia is exempt from certification as a postsecondary school such as a professional or occupational training program regulated by another state or federal governmental agency other than the SCHEV, any school, institute, or course of instruction offered by any trade association or any non-profit affiliation of a trade association on subjects related to the trade, business, or profession represented by such association.
5. A provider of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, if these activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training

Invest in Virginia: Semiconductor careers certificate program

Virginia is leveraging federal infrastructure investments for workforce development programs that focus on the future of work. One example is the Virginia Alliance for Semiconductor Technology (VAST) Fast Track to Semiconductors non-degree certificate program. VAST expects to enroll about 300 adult learners per year in the 10-week program, with veterans and underserved communities receiving preference, starting summer 2024. The project aims to train up to 600 adult learners, award 550 certificates, and create up to 100 internships. VAST brings together industry and university partners to create new workforce development opportunities and expand access to cleanrooms, labs, and equipment for training and R&D by faculty, students, and entrepreneurs. VAST received two-year grant funding from GO Virginia in 2023. Additional information is available at www.vast-alliance.org.

F. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses, or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Recalibrate Virginia's workforce development ecosystem for the future: Alignment of education and workforce development systems

Central to Virginia's cohesive hub-and-spoke ecosystem model is the alignment of the education and workforce development systems. In this model, the education system provides students with the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities they need based on their chosen career pathway.

Virginia ensures high-quality services to employers by involving them in the design of curriculum for the training programs of the career pathways needed for their business. Virginia has received feedback in the past that job seekers who completed training programs did not always demonstrate those necessary skills when hired by businesses. By aligning the training program to the needs of businesses and involving employers in the curriculum development process, Virginia's employers will be able to hire more qualified job seekers.

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: Postsecondary credentials

Virginia has taken bold steps to improve access and attainment of industry-recognized postsecondary credentials. The Governor, SCHEV, and the Chancellor of VCCS have all established goals and aligned resources to support credential attainment in the Commonwealth. The following programs implement these goals.

G3 (Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead)

In 2021, the Virginia General Assembly established the G3 program for the Commonwealth's community colleges. The program provides tuition assistance for students with a household income that's less than \$100,000. G3 is available for select programs in five of Virginia's most in-demand industries, including Early Childhood Education, Healthcare, Information Technology, Public Safety and Skilled Trades (construction and manufacturing). Students receiving G3 funding are on a stackable pathway that will lead to a certificate (and eventually an associate degree) that has immediate value in the job market. Additional information is available at www.virginiag3.com.

Credit for Prior Learning for Virginia's Veterans

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is offered at Virginia Community Colleges through a service model that involves conducting a Prior Learning Assessment for each individual that requests a review of any previous military experience or training, work experience, or other professional training to see if college credit can be obtained towards a given program of study. Each college uses different options to make that assessment, including the American Council on Education recommendations with recognition for military and workforce training, national exams (i.e., College Level Examination Program), and/or portfolio development. This assessment service allows an individual to complete his or her program of study or training more quickly and inexpensively, increasing the likelihood that greater numbers of individual learners will complete credentials.

Military Medic and Corpsman Program (MMAC)

Continuing to make Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation, the legislature established the MMAC program, which provides recently discharged service members with specialized medical training, an opportunity for employment at major Virginia healthcare systems, a pathway to licensure and long-term medical careers, and a solution to acute healthcare staffing shortages in Virginia's healthcare industry. Additional information is available at <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/education-employment/military-medics-corpsmen-mmact-program>.

HIRE VETS NOW Credentialing

This DVS initiative is funded through a grant from Altria and in collaboration with the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VVSF), the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA), and other community college workforce programs. The initiative provide assistance to service members and veterans with no other source of funding to cover the costs of industry-recognized credentials. Additional information is available at <https://dvsv3.com/v3hvninterestform>.

Fast Forward (WCG)

This program established Virginia's first statewide program to provide non-credit workforce training for industry certifications and occupational licenses aligned to regionally available jobs, offering access to middle class wages and beyond. Fast Forward created a revolving fund, administered by the SCHEV, to support student grants for non-credit workforce training targeted to industry certifications and licenses. The fund incentivizes community colleges and regional higher education centers to support students in completing their programs and attaining credentials through a first of its kind pay for performance funding formula.

To encourage Virginians attaining industry certifications and occupational licenses to attain additional postsecondary education credentials, higher education institutions participating in the program adopt a policy for the awarding of college credits to any student who has earned a noncredit workforce credential that is applicable to a student's college certificate or degree program requirements.

The VBWD produces and publishes a list of high demand occupations, found here: www.voeetableau.link/views/VOEE2024HighDemandOccupations/HighDemand?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y. Eligible institutions are required to evaluate regional labor market needs and identify related credentialing programs.

CTE High-Quality Work-Based Learning Guide

Legislation (8VAC20-131-100) revised in 2019, in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, requires that all secondary schools' offerings include participation in work-based learning experiences and opportunities to earn workforce, career readiness, and industry credentials.

The Virginia Board of Education was required to review and revise, in consultation with stakeholders, its CTE High-Quality Work-Based Learning Guide to expand the opportunities available for students to earn credit for graduation through high-quality work-based learning experiences, such as job shadowing, mentorships, internships, externships, and RAs.

Virginia's High-Quality Work-Based Learning is comprised of school-coordinated workplace experiences that enable each student to explore their career goals and interests, and apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment. Additional information is available at www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte/hqwbl.

Scale what works: Registered Apprenticeships

The VBWD has established an On-the-Job Training (OJT) policy (found at www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-403-03-Change-1-OJT-FINAL.pdf) that provides the framework and guidance for the state and local workforce development systems to use OJT, as a standalone work-based learning activity or in collaboration with other training programs, such as RA or incumbent worker training, in a consistent and effective manner under the parameters set forth in the WIOA.

A key goal of Virginia Works is to conduct outreach efforts that focus on OJT and RA programs and their benefits to the worker, business, and Virginia's economy. All apprentices registered by sponsors in Virginia work toward their journeyworker certification at the completion of their apprenticeship program. The shortest programs combine 2,000 hours of training with 144 hours of related technical instruction (RTI). Curriculum review by education specialists within Virginia Works ensures that the RTI is high-quality and is relevant to the RA occupation, regardless of the source. While the goal of RTI in an apprenticeship is to provide the apprentices with information relevant to their occupation, sponsors are free to include relevant training that may allow apprentices to pursue a degree (Associates, or in some instances a Bachelors) as part of their program, with that education sometimes continuing after the apprenticeship itself has been completed.

The VBWD also established a separate RA Programs policy (found at www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-404-02-Registered-Apprenticeship-Programs-Change-1-1.pdf) related to the inclusion of RAs to the state's ETPL. The ETPL identifies the state's available training programs on which specified WIOA funds (e.g., individual training accounts) can be spent. Adding RAs to the state's ETPL provides the opportunity for workers and businesses to be supported directly by workforce programs as a training option.

RAs on the ETPL receive exposure and marketing of programs to workers and provides a sponsor with the opportunity for new sources of support by the many workforce programs in their communities. Workforce partners may help with the recruiting and screening of qualified candidates who are eligible to receive WIOA funding to support apprentice training, such as related technical instruction, on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, and supportive services for the apprentice, e.g., tools, boots, testing fees, and transportation assistance.

Virginia Works conducts outreach with the high schools and school divisions to promote OTJ and RA. Any employer who is able to hire a high school student appropriately can use the RA model. The CTE curriculum supports the Youth Registered Apprenticeship (YRA) program.

Decide using data: Performance metrics

To further the goals of providing effective services to customers, Virginia Works leads the collection of workforce development program data. This data allows Virginia to assess how well our program serve customers, according to six key metrics. These metrics are:

- Total number of people trained
- Total number of job placements
- Total program cost
- Program cost per participant
- Progressed wage growth
- Job retention rate

To provide greater access to industry-recognized certificates, licenses and certifications, Virginia Works will evaluate outcome data to ensure all programs are training participants to the needs of employers and supporting participants in obtaining jobs in their desired career pathway.

G. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

Focus on jobs in high demand occupations: Economic development partnerships

A top priority for Virginia is close alignment of Virginia's economic efforts with workforce development activities. Virginia is aligning industry sector strategic goals, attainment of workforce training, skills and credentials, and career sustainability with the engines of the Commonwealth's economic development and growth.

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) is the state economic development authority for the Commonwealth of Virginia. VEDP collaborates with local, regional, and state partners to encourage the expansion and diversification of Virginia's economy. VEDP works to accomplish these objectives through a variety of activities, including marketing and lead generation; business retention, expansion, and attraction; trade development; business intelligence; competitive benchmarking; site development; performance-based incentives; and talent solutions. The Code of Virginia charges VEDP with the duty to encourage the coordination of the economic development efforts of public institutions, regions, communities, and private industry. Its strategic plan for economic development in Virginia is available at www.vedp.org/strategicplan.

VEDP offers and administers two discretionary incentive programs for eligible companies: the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP) and the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program. Virginia offers companies the option to choose the workforce incentive that's best for their economic development project.

VJIP is a discretionary incentive that provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs or experiencing technological change. Launched in 1965, VJIP reduces the human resource development costs of new and expanding companies. Funding and

coordination with regional workforce partners are offered to streamline company recruitment and training. VJIP is one of Virginia's most widely used economic development incentives.

The Virginia Talent Accelerator Program was launched in partnership with VCCS in 2019. The Virginia Talent Accelerator Program is a service-based discretionary incentive designed to deliver customized, turnkey, recruitment, and training solutions that are specific to a company's unique needs, processes, and culture. As a discretionary incentive, the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program is for new or expanding company projects and comes at no cost to the business. With strong support from the Governor and General Assembly, VJIP and the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program are completely state-funded, which demonstrates Virginia's commitment to enhancing job opportunities for its citizens.

In addition, VOEE coordinates data analysis on workforce development and higher education alignment. VOEE partners use these analyses for policy development and implementation related to talent development. Their high-demand occupations dashboard, created in partnership with the VBWD, is available at: www.voee-tableau.link/views/VOEE2024HighDemandOccupations/HighDemand?%3Aembed=y&%3AsGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y.

Further, GO Virginia is a bipartisan, business-led economic development initiative that incentivizes collaboration between business, education, and government. The Growth & Opportunity Board, responsible for awarding allotted funds to relevant projects, oversees Regional Councils, who submit project ideas to the Board for approval. The aim of each approved project is to create more high-paying jobs so that we can diversify and strengthen Virginia's economy. One GO Virginia initiative, called Talent Pathways, aligns educational curricula with employer needs and embeds internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities in the curricula. Talent Pathways that address identified regional workforce shortages and skills gaps or that meet projected workforce needs in high-growth sectors also receive priority. Additional information is available at www.govirginia.org.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section **II Strategic Elements**. This includes—

1. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.)

The Virginia Workforce Connection

The Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC) is a comprehensive software application used for assisting clients and tracking Workforce Development Services within the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is used by Virginia Works for WIOA Title I and Title III programs. VaWC, found at

www.vawc.virginia.gov, is the web-based, public employment service established to assist employers in finding qualified workers and to assist workers in finding suitable jobs.

The system provides integrated services via the Internet for individuals, employers, training providers, workforce staff, and one-stop partners. There are no fees charged to the employer or applicant for these services. Using the VaWC, job seekers look for jobs compatible with their skills. Employers can use the system to request one-stop center staff assistance for screening and referring applicants to job openings and access critical labor markets.

The application was developed by an organization known as Geographic Solutions Incorporated (GSI) and is marketed as Virtual one-stop (VOS). Any state agency or organization that subscribes/contracts with Geographic Solutions would apply their own branding and determine how the system would work in their business environment. The system here in Virginia is referred to as Virginia Workforce Connection and has been customized for use in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The system is configured to work within the design and limitations of several DOL programs for the tracking of client services, case management and federal reporting. The Virginia Workforce Connection is the system of record in Virginia for the WIOA Title I programs, as well as, Wagner Peyser (Title III) and Trade Adjustment Act programs. The system is also a resource used to publish Virginia's WIOA Eligible Training Provider (ETP) information as well as other Labor Market Information.

Individuals may register in the Virginia Workforce Connection either with the assistance of staff or through the virtual self-service interface. Either source of registration would allow the individual to independently access information and services surrounding employment. Virtual services have been helpful for those who have trouble reporting in person to a One-stop center/Workforce Services Office. Job seekers are encouraged to register with the assistance of a staff member so that they can be enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and have their eligibility checked for additional job services.

Though individuals are not officially enrolled and reportable until they have completed a full registration and at least one staff assisted service, many virtual self-service options are available via a basic registration in the VWC, including job search, Labor Market Information, and self-assessments. Self-service activities are tracked for the purpose of seeing how many services job seekers are accessing without assistance or involvement of workforce staff. The job seeker may later advance to more staff assisted services within the system. At the point the individual applies for and is determined eligible for WIOA Title I services; that data would fall under the responsibility of the WIOA Title I program.

In summary, DOL guidance and state policy encourage program collaboration and system efficiency where possible. The Virginia Workforce Connection was designed and configured with this concept in mind. The individual client has a single point of entry and a single record within the system. This record is accessible to program staff as the client navigates workforce programs and services.

Challenges and Opportunities

Establishing a unified and consistent approach to state workforce operating systems and policies has been a high priority for the Commonwealth. The establishment of Virginia Works will enable Virginia to streamline the development and implementation of operating systems and policies that support this Plan's goals. While workforce staff is moving vigorously toward achieving these outcomes, several persistent challenges are ahead:

- Government agencies and policymakers are slow to embrace technology, resulting in sporadic investment and adoption
- Technology is not viewed as integral to service delivery or programmatic success
- As a result of decades of compounding technical debt, chronic underinvestment, and an overwhelming reliance on closed-source, vendor-owned solutions, the time it takes to build dedicated systems makes them obsolete before they are implemented
- State merit staff requirements are confusing to workforce professionals within and outside the official state workforce agencies

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

VBWD policies support the implementation of workforce development strategies in the Commonwealth and can be found at www.virginiacareerworks.com/practitioners-corner. This site includes links to both board policy and supporting guidance issued by Virginia Works in the form of Virginia Workforce Letters.

The state board is currently undergoing a comprehensive policy review to be completed by the end of 2024. Policies have been assigned to the four VBWD subcommittees for updates and are currently under review.

Virginia Works, in their capacity as administrator of WIOA Title I programs, provides technical assistance through a one-stop system support team comprised of subject matter experts from partnering agencies, local workforce development boards, and WIOA Title I program staff. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), through their staff, will immediately alert policy staff at Virginia Works of any situation involving a conflict between partner agencies that could influence the quality of Center services.

The VBWD, supported by a cross-agency staff workgroup, advises the Governor in determining a long-term, equitable, and stable method of funding infrastructure.

The Governor will establish a policy and a procedure to determine the method of allocating costs among partners for infrastructure costs if there is an impasse in local negotiations.

In Virginia, the American Job Centers are referred to as one-stop centers or Virginia Career Works Centers. The one-stop Delivery: Comprehensive and Affiliate one-stop career centers policy defines and describes the requirements for comprehensive and affiliate one-stop

career centers in Virginia. This policy can be accessed here:

[www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-02-one-stop-Delivery-FinalSigned.pdf#new tab](http://www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-02-one-stop-Delivery-FinalSigned.pdf#new%20tab).

All local workforce development areas are provided with a One-stop center MOU template, which includes, among other requirements, provisions for partners' contributions to the one-stops. The template can be accessed here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Official-Template-VA-one-stop-Center-MOU-8-23-2021-1.pdf. The Resource Sharing Agreement begins on page 20. The Requirements for Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) policy can be accessed here: [www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-03-Requirements-for-Local-MOU-FINAL Signed.pdf](http://www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-03-Requirements-for-Local-MOU-FINAL%20Signed.pdf). The one-stop Cost Allocation Plan policy can be accessed here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-05-approved-by-VBWD-1.pdf.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for administering programs in one-stop centers is provided to local boards, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners by the Commonwealth's Title I administrator, Virginia Works. The WIOA Title I Administrator provides technical assistance workshops to the local areas at a minimum of twice a year regionally. These workshops provide assistance in the areas of performance reporting, financial reporting, VaWC System data entry, service strategies for adult, youth, and dislocated workers, and monitoring. The WIOA Title I Administrator Staff provides daily technical assistance to the local areas by responding to questions they receive via email or phone.

Professional Development

A key strategy in the Combined State Plan includes a more comprehensive and thoughtful approach to professional development. The implementation of WIOA, as well as key state priorities in the area of workforce development, has required a new look at the curriculum, the related learning outcomes, and the cost and delivery method of the training. Each local workforce development area has identified a Learning Coordinator who serves as a system link to the One-stop centers and their partners.

Overall, the state's professional development activities will depend on the support of the following partners.

The WIOA State Learning Administrator:

- Serves as the liaison between the LWDBs, State and Local Learning Coordinators, and VBWD
- Maintains the professional development plan current, facilitate the implementation of the plan, and identify existing resources to support the plan
- Periodically conducts a statewide assessment on training needs for the main functional teams: customer service, career/job seekers, employer/business services and Leadership/Management (to include LWDB and staff to LWDB)

-
- Provides training opportunities statewide for constant system development when deemed necessary
 - Communicates to the field available training/professional development opportunities that are focused on meeting the core competency areas
 - Assists with keeping the Virginia Workforce Development System Course current and relevant

Virginia Workforce Network partner entities and agencies:

- Designate a State Learning Coordinator
- Develop processes and identify resources to support professional development
- Participate in the development of a professional development plan and provide professional development opportunities for staff and/or support staff attendance at workforce development conferences and trainings
- Promote the value for professional development and certification to one-stop partners and document partners' commitment via local plans and MOU
- Maintain and support the Learning Coordinator's role
- Provide recognition of certifications/professional development accomplishments

Local Learning Coordinator:

- Assists in the "learning process" for the one-stop staff
- Identifies and keeps track of staff that are required to be certified and staff that have completed certification requirements
- Monitors participants' progress and provide encouragement
- Works with immediate supervisors to provide staff the additional support needed
- Provides progress updates to one-stop manager
- Alerts state coordinator of issues and concerns that can't be resolved locally
- Assists the State to identify training opportunities and resolve any concerns that cannot be resolved locally

Partner Programs in the one-stop Environment

In Virginia, comprehensive one-stop centers have the following requirements:

1. A physical location where both job seeker and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners

2a. Appropriately trained, full-time staff present to deliver workforce services from each of the following programs:

- WIOA Title I—Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth programs
- WIOA Title III—Wagner Peyser employment services
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants-funded staff (including Disabled Veteran Outreach Program or Local Veterans Employment Representative staff)

2b. The presence of the following programs on a regular basis. Access to program resources when staff is not on site must be specifically addressed in the negotiated MOU and describe how individuals served at the Center will be provided access:

- WIOA Title IV—Vocational Rehabilitation services, which will participate by having a staff presence on a regular basis with at least one office/cubicle in at least one comprehensive one-stop career center in each local workforce development area, providing regular training to support system partners staff in the identification and delivery of services to individuals with disabilities and through strategic investments in hardware and software to support the delivery of staff-supported services and self-service clients in the comprehensive One-stop center's Resource Room
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy services.

2c. Access to the following programs and the access strategy must be specifically addressed in the negotiated MOU:

- Virginia Works– Registered Apprenticeship
- Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education – Postsecondary Training
- Non-Credit Workforce Training provided by VCCS
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- TANF and the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW)
- SNAP E&T
- Other programs authorized under title I of WIOA, including Job Corps; YouthBuild; Native American programs; and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs
- The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) employment and training activities
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employment and training activities
- Programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws
- Second Chance Act programs

1. Full access to career (basic and individualized) and training services

-
- a. Access is defined as (1) having partner program staff physically present at the one-stop career center appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through partner programs; and/or (2) providing direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide relevant information and/or services.
 2. A full array of labor market information for job seekers, including online access to tools and resources
 - a. This information shall be provided by Virginia Works through the Virginia Workforce Connection and virginiaworks.gov. It may be supplemented with local tools and resources.
 3. Access to programs, services, and activities during regular business days and hours
 - a. Program access strategies must include consideration for program access during non-traditional hours
 4. A referral processes in place for employers and job seekers to have access to specialized or other services available through partner programs and service providers
 - a. These processes must be documented in the partner MOU

The WIOA also allows affiliate one-stop centers. In Virginia, an affiliate one-stop center has the following requirements:

1. At least two or more partner programs with a physical staff presence at the location
 - a. An affiliate one-stop center does not need to provide access to every required one-stop partner program, although it is encouraged that remote access be provided, such as program partner electronic intake forms and appointment scheduling at other locations
 - b. The frequency of the physical presence of various program staff at the affiliate one-stop center is determined at the local level through arrangements with program partners
 - c. At each affiliate one-stop center, a program partner lead shall be identified. This lead could be any partner described in sections 2a-2b. This encourages an expansive and inclusive network of physical one-stop center locations.
2. Wagner-Peyser employment service sites cannot be affiliate one-stop career centers unless they are collocated with another program partner
 - a. Another partner program may not include the partner administering the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program (JVSG), Trade Act Program, or unemployment insurance programs.
 - b. If Wagner-Peyser employment services are provided at an affiliate site, there must be at least a WIOA Title I service provider at the affiliate site with staff

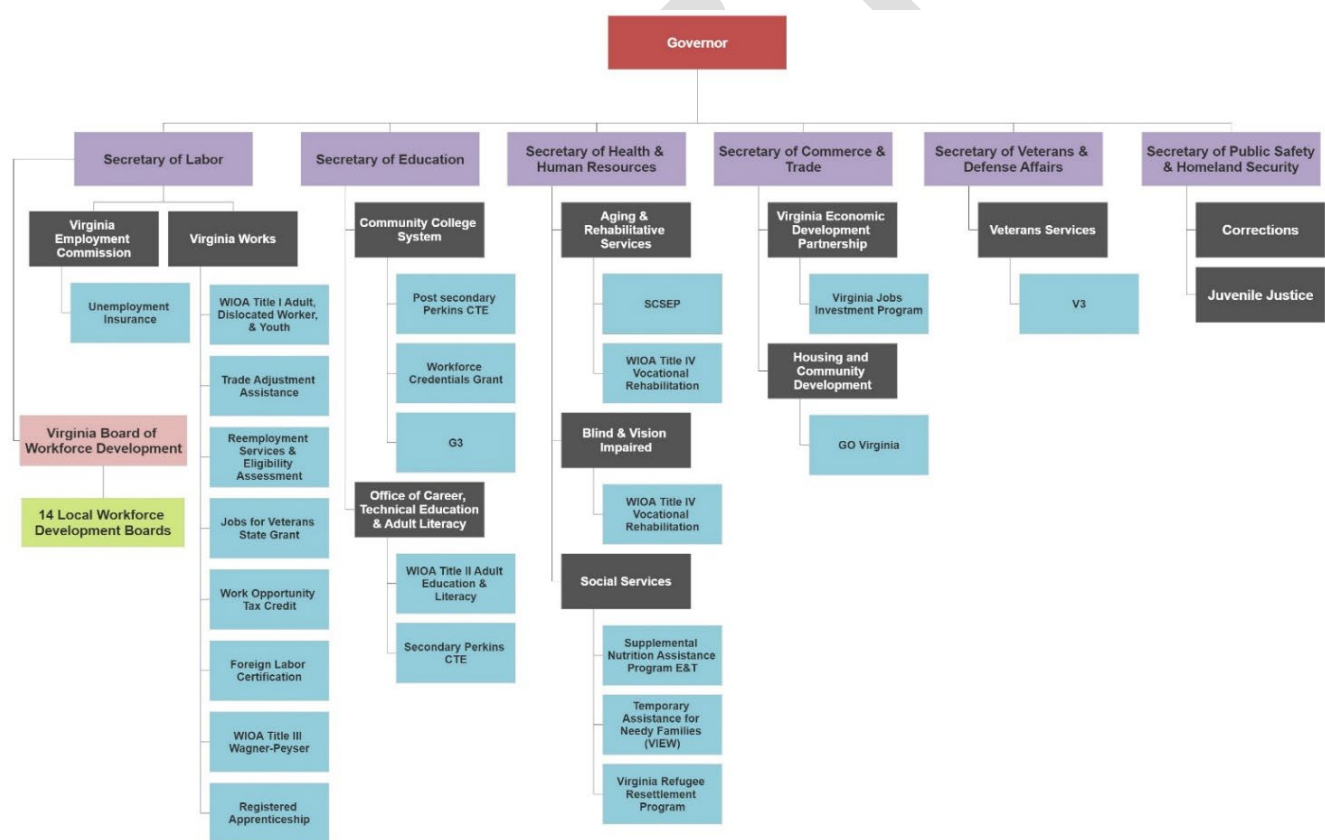
physically present more than 50 percent of the time the center is open, in addition to any other partners as established in the local workforce area plan

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. State Agency Organization

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

This organizational chart reflects the creation of the new workforce agency, Virginia Works, which now includes most of the core workforce programs. Virginia Works resides under the Secretary of Labor, whom the Governor has designated to oversee the workforce system. The state workforce board is a strategic entity that operates outside of any one agency and works with the Governor to provide system-spanning policy recommendations, strategic direction to the one-stop service delivery system, and performance oversight.



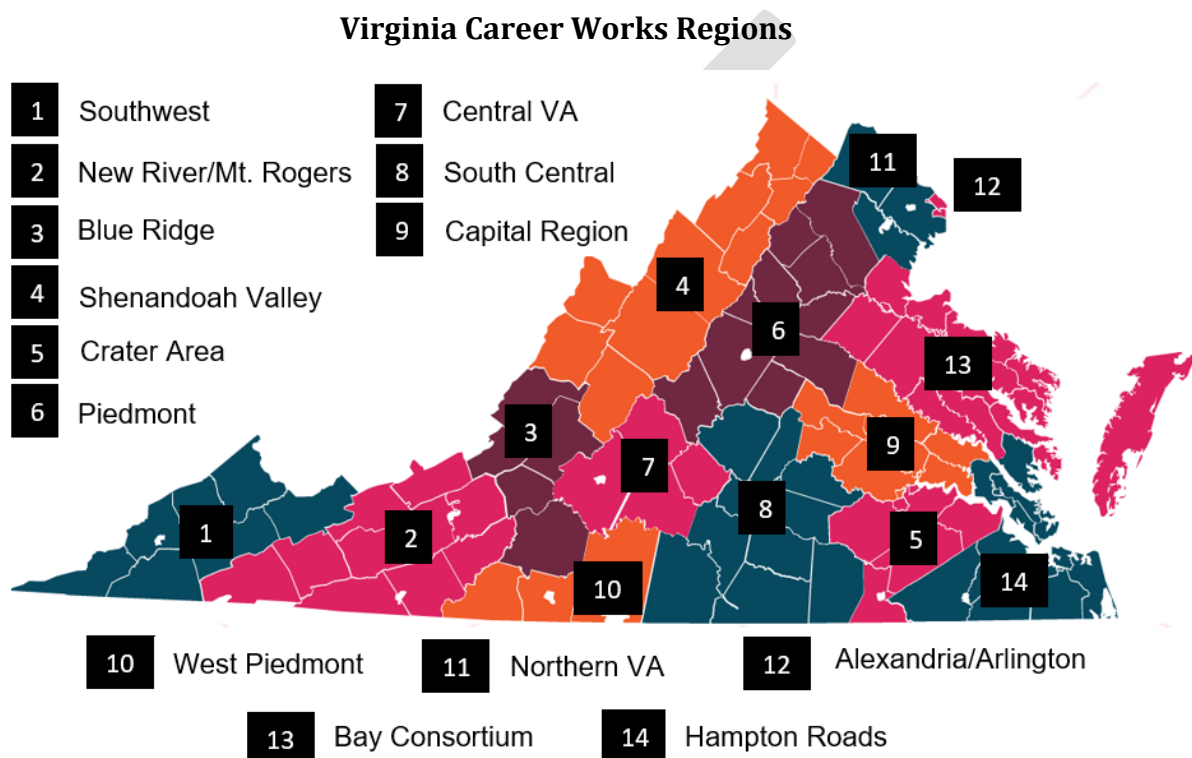
The six core programs in the plan are administered by four agencies: Virginia Works (Title I & Title III), the Virginia Office of Career Technical Education and Adult Literacy (Title II), and DARS and DBVI (Title IV).

The Secretary of Labor has responsibilities in state code for the implementation of WIOA and the Combined State Plan. Virginia uses a hub-and-spoke service delivery strategy, which delivers services throughout its 14 local workforce areas using a network of 51 one-stop centers, cross-agency Business Service teams, field-deployed program specialists, and local office-based social service agencies. Virginia currently requires that each local workforce

area have at least one comprehensive one-stop center, which provides access to core partner programs and memorandums of understanding with other system partners.

Local Workforce Areas and Workforce Boards

The one-stop service delivery system in Virginia includes 14 local workforce areas that support a network of comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers. These serve as hubs where individuals and employers can access services. LWDs serve as regional conveners of workforce system resources. The role of local workforce boards is important and one Virginia is interested in strengthening across the Commonwealth.



Southwest Region (Area 1)

Buchanan County
Dickenson County
Lee County
Russell County
Scott County
Tazewell County
Wise County
Norton City

Tazewell County and Clinch Valley Community Action operate the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult program for the seven counties and one city in Southwest Virginia. The adult program meets employer needs by helping customers upgrade skills, obtain employment, improve job retention, and increase earnings. These services include

training and assistance in obtaining industry recognized credentials in in-demand occupations and help with re-entry into employment in high-growth industries.

New River/Mt. Rogers Region (Area 2)

Bland County
Carroll County
Floyd County
Giles County
Grayson County
Montgomery County
Pulaski County
Smyth County
Washington County
Wythe County
Bristol City
Galax City
Radford City

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board strengthens the region's workforce by promoting opportunities for people of New River/Mount Rogers Area to reach and maintain economic self-sufficiency while increasing the availability of a trained and skilled workforce for area businesses and assisting service providers in improving the level of training and services offered to clients.

Greater Roanoke Region (Area 3)

Alleghany County
Botetourt County
Craig County
Franklin County
Roanoke County
Clifton Forge City
Covington City
Roanoke City
Salem City

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, serving the Blue Ridge region, is one of 14 federally mandated organizations in the Commonwealth overseen by the VBWD in compliance with WIOA. Members of the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board represent the community leaders from business, education, local government, and service providers. The Board's mission is to cultivate a dynamic workforce development system that stimulates economic development.

Shenandoah Valley Region (Area 4)

Augusta County
Bath County

Clarke County
Frederick County
Highland County
Page County
Rockbridge County
Rockingham County
Shenandoah County
Warren County
Buena Vista City
Harrisonburg City
Lexington City
Staunton City
Waynesboro City
Winchester City

The Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board (SVWDB) was established in 2000 to provide oversight and administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the Shenandoah Valley. The SVWDB acts as a catalyst to provide seamless services among various workforce programs and provides community leadership around workforce issues. In this capacity, the SVWDB assumes five strategic roles as convener:

- Convener to bring together business, education, economic development, organized labor, and community and faith-based organizations to focus on regional workforce issues
- Workforce analyst to research, disseminate, understand, and act as the repository for current labor market and economic information and trends
- Broker to bring together systems to solve problems or broker new relationships with businesses and workers
- Community voice to advocate for the importance of workforce policy, providing perspective about the need for skilled workers
- Capacity builder to enhance the region's ability to meet workforce needs of local employers, develop workers, and build a stronger community

Crater Region (Area 5)

Dinwiddie County
Greensville County
Prince George County
Surry County
Sussex County
Colonial Heights City
Emporia City
Hopewell City
Petersburg City

The Crater Regional Workforce Development Board (CRWDB) strives to increase employment opportunities and to ensure the integration of services to prepare individuals to meet the needs of business and industry across the Crater region. CRWDB oversees workforce development activities in conjunction with community partners.

The CRWDB administers two comprehensive one-stop centers and one satellite office for employers and job seekers across the Crater Region. These centers help businesses find qualified job seekers, while providing one of the most efficient ways to retain existing employees by training them to keep pace with industry standards.

Piedmont Region (Area 6)

Albemarle County
Culpeper County
Fauquier County
Fluvanna County
Greene County
Louisa County
Madison County
Nelson County
Orange County
Rappahannock County
Charlottesville City

The Piedmont Workforce Development Board is part of a partnership in the region. The partnership combines the resources and staff of the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (the Partnership), the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CVSBDC), and the Piedmont Workforce Network (PWN). This partnership provides five core services for business decision makers and its local partners:

- **Research and Analytics:** Comprehensive, customized economic, demographic, labor, property, logistics, and infrastructure research
- **Site Selection Assistance:** one-stop site selection (search, analysis, and facilitation) services for start-up, expanding, satellite, or relocating facilities
- **Entrepreneurial Support:** Training and technical assistance with information, seminars, and individual counseling
- **Existing Business Service:** Collaboration with state and local partners for training, infrastructure, finance, and other solutions
- **Workforce Development Solutions:** Developed for employers and job seekers including recruitment, screening, training, and placement services

The Piedmont Workforce Development Board has the central role of providing leadership and direction on local strategic workforce issues, identifying local needs, and developing strategies to address those needs. The Piedmont Workforce Development Board has 34 members, 19 of whom are business representatives. Other members include representatives

of education, economic development, labor, community-based organizations, and Workforce Center required partners.

Central Region (Area 7)

Amherst County
Appomattox County
Bedford County
Campbell County
Bedford City
Lynchburg City

Central Virginia Workforce Development Board is an interwoven network of organizations with a centralized vision to provide regional development leadership within the 2,000 square miles that surround Lynchburg. It provides a single point of contact to the public and private sector for regional planning services, economic development, marketing, and workforce training.

South Central Region (Area 8)

Amelia County
Brunswick County
Buckingham County
Charlotte County
Cumberland County
Halifax County
Lunenburg County
Mecklenburg County
Nottoway County
Prince Edward County

The South Central Workforce Development Board collaborates with partners to provide local businesses and all citizens with employment, job training, support services, and more. The purpose of our One-stop centers is to integrate partner services and coordinate resources for job seekers, employers/business, skilled workers, training, and, where appropriate, incumbent workers.

Capital Region (Area 9)

Charles City County
Chesterfield County
Goochland County
Hanover County
Henrico County
New Kent County
Powhatan County
Richmond City

The Capital Region Workforce Development Board works to increase private sector employment opportunities and to ensure the integration of services to prepare individuals to meet the needs of business and industry in the Richmond region. The partnership also oversees the activities authorized under WIOA.

By developing and maintaining a quality workforce, and by serving as the focal point for integrated local and regional workforce development initiatives, the partnership aims to transform the workforce development system to advance the economic well-being of the region.

West Piedmont Region (Area 10)

Henry County
Patrick County
Pittsylvania County
Danville City
Martinsville City
South Boston City

The West Piedmont Workforce Development Board funds and monitors the region's four Virginia Workforce Centers and numerous employment services and training programs for employers, jobseekers, and the youth. The Board and sub-recipients are equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Northern Region (Area 11)

Fairfax County
Loudoun County
Prince William County
Fairfax City
Falls Church City
Manassas City
Manassas Park City

The Northern Virginia Workforce Development Board (NVWDB) is a team of private and public sector partners who share a common goal: to promote Northern Virginia's economic prosperity and long-term growth and to help fund comprehensive employment and training services to area employers, job seekers, and youth.

Area operations are administered by the SkillSource Group, Inc. (SSG), a separate nonprofit entity of the NVWDB with its own Board of Directors. SSG shares in the mission and goals of NVWDB, while also serving as fiscal agent and an entity that pursues additional funding sources for the board. These dollars further sustain and create workforce development initiatives for all current and future employers and job seekers throughout the region. SSG is a non-profit organization serving Northern Virginia Employers and Job Seekers offering a wide range of free job placement, training, and educational services to employers, job seekers, and incumbent workers.

Alexandria/Arlington Region (Area 12)

Arlington County
Alexandria City

The Alexandria/Arlington Regional Workforce Council serves as the local Workforce Development Board under WIOA. The Council's mission is to advance workforce development programs and initiatives that achieve sustainable economic growth in Alexandria City and Arlington County.

The Workforce Council provides oversight over WIOA services at the region's two workforce centers: the Alexandria Workforce Development Center and the Arlington Employment Center. These services include financial support for college tuition and vocational certifications; subsidies for transportation, books, and fees while in school; and uniforms for employment.

Bay Consortium Region (Area 13)

Accomack County
Caroline County
Essex County
King and Queen County
King George County
King William County
Lancaster County
Mathews County
Middlesex County
Northampton County
Northumberland County
Richmond County
Spotsylvania County
Stafford County
Westmoreland County
Fredericksburg City

The Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board administers the federally funded WIOA Program that serves adults and youth from low-income families (economically disadvantaged) and other eligible workers who have lost their jobs. The Bay Consortium supports public/private partnerships involving local government, business and industry, labor, education and training institutions, employment services, and community support organizations.

Hampton Roads Region (Area 14)

Isle of Wight County
Norfolk City
Southampton County
Portsmouth City
Chesapeake City

Suffolk City
Franklin City
Virginia Beach City
Gloucester County
James City County
York County
Hampton City
Newport News City
Poquoson City
Williamsburg City

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council is responsible for developing workforce policy and administering workforce development initiatives. The Council oversees federally funded workforce development programs, which assist businesses in accessing qualified workers and jobseekers in finding suitable job openings and bolstering their earning power through training.

B. State Board.

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

Virginia Board of Workforce Development Legal Status and Authority

The Board is established as a policy board in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Board is to assist the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Secretary of Labor in meeting the workforce development needs in the Commonwealth through recommendation of policies and strategies to increase coordination and thus efficiencies of operation between all education and workforce programs. It is a required body under WIOA and has specific federal and state statutory functions. It is a strategic entity which resides in the Governor's office, independent from any single workforce agency or program.

i. Membership Roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Board Membership

Except for legislative members, Board members are appointed by the Governor, which is compliant with the requirements of WIOA. All required board members (including ex-officio) have voting privileges. Membership categories include:

- Secretary of Labor
- Two members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee

on Rules. Legislative members shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office and may be reappointed for successive terms.

- The Secretaries of Commerce and Trade; Education; Health and Human Resources; Veterans Affairs and Defense Affairs; and Public Safety and Homeland Security; or their designees, each of whom shall serve ex officio
- The Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System or a designee, who shall serve ex officio
- Additional members appointed by the Governor and are required to ensure that the composition of the Board satisfies the requirements of the WIOA. The additional members shall include:
 - Two local elected officials
 - Eight members who shall be representatives of the workforce, to include (i) three representatives nominated by state labor federations, of which one shall be a representative of a joint-labor apprenticeship program; and (ii) at least one representative of a private career college
 - Non-legislative citizen members representing the business community, the total number of whom shall constitute a majority of the members of the Board and who shall include the presidents of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Manufacturers Association or their designees and the remaining members who are business owners, chief executive officers, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, senior managers, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy-making or hiring authority who industry sectors that represent the Commonwealth's economic development priorities. Business members shall represent diverse regions of the state, to include urban, suburban, and rural areas, and at least two members shall also be members of local workforce development boards.

Virginia Board of Workforce Development Roster (as of February 2024)	
Member Name	Affiliation
Glenn Youngkin	Governor of Virginia
Business Representatives	
Jim Monroe, Chair	Global VP of Customer Success, Cisco AppDynamics
Xavier Beale, Vice-Chair	Vice President of Trades, Newport News Shipbuilding
Rich Allevi	Co-Founder and Vice President of Development, Sun Tribe Solar
John Bahouth	Executive Vice President of Administration, Clean Energy
Hobart "Hobey" Bauhan	<i>President,</i> Virginia Poultry Federation

Virginia Board of Workforce Development Roster (as of February 2024)	
Member Name	Affiliation
Lynne Bushey	CEO, En Route Consulting, LLC
Robby Demeria	Chief of Staff Phlow
Barry DuVal	
Designee Keith Martin Executive Vice President, Public Policy & Government Relations, General Counsel, Executive Director of the Virginia Chamber Foundation	President & CEO. The Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Tierney Fairchild	Co-Founder and Executive Director, Resilience Education
Cindy Free	Industrial Rehab Coordinator Atlantic Orthopaedic Specialists Physical Therapy
Andrew Glowatsky	Dir. of Reliability and Supply Chain operations, Church and Dwight Co., Inc.
Don Haller	Associate General Counsel, Retired
Debora Harvey	Executive Director, Heavy Construction Contractors Association
Hugh Joyce	President, James River Air Conditioning Company
Kunal Kumar	President, Pooja Group, Inc.
Nathaniel X. Marshall	Sr. Human Resource Specialist, BWX Technologies
Lara Overy	Commissioner of Revenue, City of Williamsburg
Jason Parker	President, VA Building Trades
Antonio Rice	President and CEO, Jobs for Virginia Graduates
Anne Schlusser	Founding Partner, Clarity Technology Partners
Francisco Semiao	Director of Regulatory Affairs MedStar Health
Padmanabhan Seshaiyer	Professor and Director, George Mason University
John David Smith, Jr.	Owner, Water Street Kitchen, Village Square Restaurant & V2 Bar
Yolanda Shields	Founder, Yesbuilds; Adjunct Faculty, Shenandoah University

Virginia Board of Workforce Development Roster (as of February 2024)	
Member Name	Affiliation
Cheryl Spraberry	President, Advanced Integrated Technologies & Surge Force
Zuzana Steen	Director, Academic and Community Relations Site Leadership Team Member Micron Technology Virginia, Inc.
Brett Vassey	President and CEO, Virginia Manufacturer's Association
Louise Welch	Director, Head of Talent, Amazon
Workforce Representatives	
Richard Hatch	CWA Staff Representative Communication Workers of America
Doris Crouse-Mays	<i>President,</i> Virginia AFL-CIO
David Doré	
Designee Corey McCray President, Paul D. Camp Community College	Chancellor, Virginia Community College System
Mark Dreyfus	President, ECPI University
Rick Mitchell	Commissioner, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Travis Staton	President and CEO, United Way of Southwest Virginia
Elected Officials	
James "Jimmy" Gray	Vice-Mayor, City of Hampton
Jeremy McPike	Senator, 29th District, Senate of Virginia
Wendell Walker	Delegate, 23rd District, Virginia House of Delegates
Secretaries	
Terrance "Terry" Cole	Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security
Craig Crenshaw	
Designee Jordan Stewart Assistant Secretary, Veterans and Defense Affairs	Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs

Virginia Board of Workforce Development Roster (as of February 2024)	
Member Name	Affiliation
Aimee Rogstad Guidera Designee Jason Powell Senior Advisor	Secretary of Education
John Littel Designee James L. Jenkins Special Advisor for Healthcare Workforce, Secretary of Health and Human Resources	Secretary of Health and Human Resources
Caren Merrick	Secretary of Commerce and Trade
George “Bryan” Slater	Secretary of Labor

The current Board roster is available at www.virginiacareerworks.com/board/members

ii. Board Activities

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

Board Activities

According to the Code of Virginia § 2.2-2472, the Board shall undertake the following actions to implement and foster workforce development and training and better align education and workforce programs to meet current and projected skills requirements of an increasingly technological, global workforce:

1. Provide policy advice to the Governor on workforce and workforce development issues to create a business-driven system that yields increasing rates of attainment of workforce credentials in demand by business and increasing rates of jobs creation and attainment
2. Provide policy direction to local workforce development boards
3. Assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of any combined state plan developed pursuant to the WIOA
4. Identify current and emerging statewide workforce needs of the business community;
5. Forecast and identify training requirements for the new workforce
6. Recommend strategies to match trained workers with available jobs to include strategies for increasing business engagement in education and workforce development
7. Evaluate the extent to which the state's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs and labor market statistics and report the findings of this analysis to the Governor every two years

8. Advise and oversee the development of a strategic workforce dashboard and tools that will inform the Governor, policy makers, system stakeholders, and the public on issues such as state and regional labor market conditions, the relationship between the supply and demand for workers, workforce program outcomes, and projected employment growth or decline. The Virginia Employment Commission, along with other workforce partners, shall provide data to populate the tools and dashboard

9. Determine and publish a list of jobs, trades, and professions for which high demand for qualified workers exists or is projected by the Virginia Employment Commission. The Virginia Employment Commission shall support the VBWD in making such determination. Such information shall be published biennially and disseminated to employers; education and training entities, including associate-degree-granting and baccalaureate public institutions of higher education; government agencies, including the Department of Education and public libraries; and other users in the public and private sectors

10. Develop pay-for-performance contract strategy incentives for rapid reemployment services consistent with the WIOA as an alternative model to traditional programs

11. Conduct a review of budgets, which shall be submitted annually to the Board by each agency conducting federal and state funded career and technical and adult education and workforce development programs, that identify the agency's sources and expenditures of administrative, workforce education and training, and support services for workforce development programs

12. Review and recommend industry credentials that align with high demand occupations, which credentials shall include a credential that determines career readiness

13. Define the Board's role in certifying WIOA training providers, including those not subject to the authority expressed in Article 3 (§ 23.1-213 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of Title 23.1

14. Provide an annual report to the Governor concerning its actions and determinations under subdivisions 1 through 13

15. Create quality standards, guidelines, and directives applicable to local workforce development boards and the operation of One-stops, as necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of this article.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. Assessment of Core and one-stop Program Partner Programs.

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Virginia is committed to developing an increasingly evidence-based approach to workforce development and is investing in new performance management tools to expedite our

continuous improvement process. Virginia's Workforce Data Trust tracks participants' journey through the workforce development system in real-time, enabling the coordination and optimization of service delivery across partner programs. This secure integration platform also allows administrative data to be leveraged for the rigorous evaluation of program efficacy.

Insights surfaced through analysis are accessible to staff and the public through a performance dashboard, helping to nurture a culture of data-driven decision making across the organization. In support of that aim, the Secretary of Labor recommends the following hierarchy of evidence be considered for purposes of program evaluation and grant making:

- Strong evidence: meaning at least two evaluation reports have demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested nationally, regionally, at the state- level, or with different populations or locations in the same local area using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental design evaluation (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)) or a quasi-experimental design evaluation (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. See [CLEAR.dol.gov](https://clear.dol.gov) for full definitions of strong or moderate study design. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluations should be conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.
- Moderate evidence: meaning at least one evaluation report has demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design showing evidence of effectiveness on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluations should be conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.
- Preliminary evidence: meaning at least one evaluation report has demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested using a well-designed and well-implemented pre/post-assessment without a comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups showing evidence of effectiveness on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluation may be conducted either internally or externally.
- Pre-preliminary evidence: meaning there is program performance data for the intervention showing improvements for one or more key workforce outputs or outcomes.

Promising Performance-driven Strategies for Procurement and Grant making

- Award preference points to providers offering models supported by high or moderate causal evidence
- Develop contracts that pay directly for outcomes, exploring potential flexibility around award sizes, time periods, and performance measures
- Build a growing base of evidence by promoting, conducting, and financing evaluation

-
- Improve internal and external transparency regarding funding and program performance

Assessment of Core Programs

Virginia Works employs a Performance and Evaluation Coordinator whose responsibilities include statistical analysis of WIOA Title I data for accountability purposes, as well as the development of a local statistical adjustment model. The local model includes many of the same predictor variables used in DOL's statewide model. Local labor market data was used to account for regional differences among Virginia's 14 LWDA's. As required by WIOA, the newly developed local model was used to inform the PY 2024-2025 performance measures. Furthermore, summary reports were developed to provide comparisons between actual performance, adjusted performance, and negotiated goals for each performance indicator, by LWDA. These tools will be helpful for evaluation of Title I performance at both the state and local level.

In support of Title I performance evaluation, detailed reports have been developed to inform local staff about the specific participants who are included in each performance measure. These are distributed to local staff on a quarterly basis, in addition to the local reports generated through WIPS. Using these reports, local performance can be analyzed by various demographic categories and participant characteristics. Virginia plans to continue exploring additional data-driven initiatives that allow for a deeper analysis of WIOA performance to highlight program successes and uncover opportunities for improvement.

The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) each provide the opportunity for agency specific customer feedback during their service provision processes. These agency specific customer surveys allow for an in-depth analysis of the specialized services provided.

The Virginia Workforce Connection, an electronic service provision and tracking tool and the state system of record for Title I and Title III, offers customers the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey once they have received WIOA Title III services. Both employers and job seekers can respond to the survey.

The Title IV general vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, DARS, works in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to assess the perspectives of Title IV VR consumers who have not yet entered employment. This innovative approach permits real-time assessment of services, allowing issues to be addressed prior to consumers exiting the program. Each month, a stratified sample based on office proportion is used to ensure that the sample matches as closely as possible the population proportions for DARS' offices as of survey selection. DARS also offers consumers the option of completing either a paper or online survey. The Title IV VR agency that serves individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind, DBVI, partners with its SRC for DBVI in reviewing the effectiveness of, and individual satisfaction with the VR services provided. All eligible individuals, who receive services, are provided the opportunity to participate in VR program evaluation through a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is provided with several ways for individuals to respond, in paper form by mail, online, or by telephone.

The Adult Education program is a decentralized, grant-funded network of providers, each of which has mechanisms to solicit and collect customer (student) feedback and suggestions that are acted upon by the grant administrative team.

Assessment of one-stop Partner Programs

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

The Code of Virginia delineates the workforce responsibilities of the Governor, the Secretary of Labor, and the VBWD. This legislation reinforces federal requirements and establishes several responsibilities and functional roles that support Virginia's workforce system. These include oversight, assessment, evaluation and a continuous improvement strategy at the state, local area, and program level.

one-stop Delivery System Partner Program Annual Assessment

The statewide WIOA Title I monitoring team conducts an annual review of activities in the local workforce development areas, including the activities of the one-stop partners and Combined State Plan partners. This review includes a customer satisfaction survey for job seeking customers and business customers at each one-stop location. Customer satisfaction surveys are made available to the job seeking customers through various means, such as available in the resource room in paper and electronic versions, offered to customers at the end of workshops/meetings/events in either an electronic or printed format, and some are made available on the LWDA website as well. The business customers are also offered an opportunity to provide customer service feedback at the local level after each event/provision of service. Virginia also relies on the agencies providing specialized workforce services to develop and implement agency specific customer satisfaction surveys.

Currently the one-stop center customer service feedback results are only generalizable to the individual populations for each of the individual LWDA, while DARS and DBVI customer feedback was specific to the customers receiving their unique program services respectively. Each LWDB has a process for collecting, analyzing, and incorporating the customer satisfaction survey results into their daily operations. The survey results are collected and analyzed by program managers or one-stop operators. The results are shared with the partner team members, and any resulting actions needed to improve operations are implemented through the appropriate partnership of one-stop staff.

Quality

The VBWD is required to evaluate the extent to which the Commonwealth's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs and labor market statistics and report the findings of this analysis to the governor every two years. The state workforce board policy related to Quality Standards for programs operating in the one-stop center establishes a balanced scorecard approach to monitor customer relations, operations, professional development, and resource management.

In customer relations, the policy advances concepts like “no wrong door”, collaborative service delivery and programmatic continuum, affirmative referrals, and total customer satisfaction. The operations section of the policy drives four priority service areas – intake, assessment and screening; job placement, training and skills development, and employer outreach and business services. Resource management reinforces the commitment to co-location and resource sharing. Finally, the policy positions professional development as a critical factor for success. Each center must develop and execute a professional development strategy to benefit the partners.

Effectiveness

The Secretary of Labor is required to monitor, in coordination with the VBWD, the effectiveness of each one-stop center and recommend actions needed to improve their effectiveness, establish measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the local workforce development boards and conduct annual evaluations of the effectiveness of each local workforce development board.

The Secretary also is required to conduct annual evaluations of the performance of workforce development and training programs and activities and their administrators and providers, including:

1. A comparison of the per-person costs for each program or activity
2. A comparative rating of the per-person costs for each program or activity
3. An explanation of the extent to which each agency's appropriation requests incorporate the data reflected in the cost comparison described in clause (1) and the comparative rating described in clause (2).

The Secretary also provides a report to the Legislature detailing the career and technical education and workforce development program's performance against state-level metrics.

The VBWD is required to conduct a review of budgets, which must be submitted annually to the Board by each agency conducting federal and state funded career and technical and adult education and workforce development programs, which identify the agency's sources and expenditures of administrative, workforce education and training, and support services for workforce development programs.

They also maintain a Performance Committee to develop the metrics and measurements for publishing comprehensive workforce score cards and other longitudinal data that will enable the Virginia to measure comprehensive accountability and performance.

Improvement of Programs

- The Secretary of Labor is required to:
 - Submit biennial reports, which shall be included in the governor's executive budget submissions to the General Assembly, on improvements in the coordination of workforce development efforts statewide. The reports shall identify (i) program success rates in relation to performance measures

established by the VBWD, (ii) obstacles to program and resource coordination, and (iii) strategies for facilitating statewide program and resource coordination.

B. Previous Assessment Results

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e., the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A) Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The Secretary of Labor and the Performance and Accountability Committee of the VBWD will conduct a comprehensive assessment of service delivery by the one-stop core programs in Virginia. The assessment will examine data from the last three years for both individual and business services.

C. Evaluation

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

How Virginia will Conduct Evaluations and Research Projects on Activities under WIOA Core Programs

Virginia will conduct evaluations and research projects in accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor evaluation principles of rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics, as described in the State Workforce Agency Evaluation Toolkit. Virginia will develop an evaluation plan that is vetted by key stakeholders and includes high-level research questions and an evidence portfolio. Virginia will conduct evaluations and research projects that assess the implementation, outcomes, impact, and cost of the workforce system and individual programs.

How Evaluations and Research Projects will be Coordinated with State and Local Boards and with State Agencies

When beginning evaluations and research projects, Virginia will provide draft evaluation plans and objectives to state and local boards and state agencies to review and provide feedback. The final evaluation plan and objectives will be developed from this feedback. State and local boards and state agencies will be notified of the methods of evaluation and the timeline for evaluation to avoid a duplication of efforts and time to better coordinate partner activities. State and local boards and state agencies will be provided with evaluation status updates and interim reports to provide transparency in the evaluation process and coordinate efforts with key stakeholders. The final evaluation report will be provided to state and local boards and state agencies. The state board will vote on the implementation of

recommendations provided in the report and provide guidance to the local boards and state agencies for this implementation.

In the 2021 workforce system evaluation, the above standards were implemented to coordinate with state and local boards and state agencies.

How Evaluations will be Coordinated with the Evaluations Provided for under WIOA

The Secretary of Labor and the VBWD will utilize the results of the assessment referenced in III. b.4.C of this Plan to complete a comprehensive evaluation of core program services delivered through Virginia's one-stop centers. This effort will include participation by the VBWD's staff which represent the core programs under WIOA and additional programs, such as veteran's workforce services and other civilian workforce reentry programs, that Virginia considers core to the workforce development system.

The assessment evaluation will also include information obtained from assessments conducted by federal agencies such as the Department of Labor and Department of Education.

Once the evaluation of the effectiveness of the core programs and one-stop partner programs is completed, the state will review its strategies and policies and make appropriate adjustments to improve service delivery. The evaluation will also serve to make appropriate updates to Virginia's Combined State Plan.

Also, the evaluation and resulting actions, such as policies to be implemented across Virginia's workforce development system and changes in strategies, will be shared with the federal agencies. A follow-up evaluation of policy implementation results will also be conducted by the VBWD in future years.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. For Title I Programs

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

i. Youth Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Youth Funding Formula: There is a requirement (the "Hold Harmless" provision) in the Act (Section 128[b][2][A][ii]) that no LWDA shall receive less than 90 percent of that LWDA's average relative share of Youth funding for the preceding two years.

The Youth funding factors and their respective weights, as specified in the Act, are as follows:

- Unemployment in Areas of Substantial Unemployment – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of unemployed persons in an ASU within a LWDA compared to the total number of unemployed persons in ASUs in Virginia. (Source: VEC)

- Excess Unemployment – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of excess unemployed persons within a LWDA compared to the total number of excess unemployed persons in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Economically Disadvantaged Youth – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of disadvantaged youth in the LWDA compared to the number of disadvantaged youth in Virginia. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 Census)

ii. [Adult and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133\(b\)\(2\) or \(b\)\(3\)](#)

Adult Funding Formula: There is a requirement (the “Hold Harmless” provision) in the Act (Section 133[b][2][A][ii]) that no Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) shall receive less than 90 percent of that LWDA’s average relative share of Adult funding for the preceding two years.

The Adult funding factors and their respective weights, as specified in the Act, are as follows:

- Unemployment in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU) – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of unemployed persons in an ASU within a LWDA compared to the total number of unemployed persons in ASUs in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Excess Unemployment – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of excess unemployed persons within a LWDA compared to the total number of excess unemployed persons in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Economically Disadvantaged Adults – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of disadvantaged adults in the LWDA compared to the number of disadvantaged adults in Virginia. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 Census)

iii. [Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133\(b\)\(2\) and Based on Data and Weights Assigned](#)

Dislocated Worker Funding Formula: The current factors and respective weights that make up Virginia’s Dislocated Worker formula are as follows:

- Continued Claims – (20 percent): Relative number of an area’s unemployment insurance claimants from the Commonwealth’s regular unemployment compensation system as compared to the sum of all areas for Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Excess Unemployment – (10 percent): Relative number of an area’s unemployed above the 4.5 percent unemployment rate level as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Initial Claims – (10 percent): Relative number of an area’s Initial unemployment insurance claimants as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Declining Employment – (20 percent): Relative number of an area’s employment losses in those industries (two-digit North American Industry Classification System

Sectors) which experienced a decline in annual (July through June) employment over the most current five-year period (as determined by QCEW data derived from unemployment insurance tax records) as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)

- Agricultural Employment Loss – (5 percent): Relative estimated number of an area’s agricultural workers lost as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: BEA)
- Long Term Unemployed – (15 percent): Relative number of an area’s regular unemployment compensation claimants receiving benefits for greater than fifteen weeks as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Final Claims – (20 percent): Relative number of an area’s claimants receiving final payments under the regular unemployment compensation system as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)

B. For Title II

i. Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.

During the program year 2022-2023, VDOE will require providers funded through the 2020-2023 cycle to submit continuation awards, both the regional providers funded through section 231 and section 225, adult education with correctional education, and the IELCE providers funded through section 243.

The next three-year competition will be held for the 2023-2025 cycle. Federal regulations require that only organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services are eligible to apply for AEFLA funds. Applications will be screened to determine demonstrated effectiveness based on data submitted by applicants from program year 2021-2022, and only the applications that meet the requirements set forth by the competitive guidelines for demonstrated effectiveness will be advanced for full review. Applications are first reviewed by the local workforce development board(s) for alignment with the local plan; comments from these reviewers are provided to external reviewers who must consider the boards’ comments in the full evaluation.

Demonstrated effectiveness guidelines, which require applicants to report performance data in three content areas (reading and writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition) and post-exit indicators, will be published at the time of the competition. For applications submitted by a consortium, performance data must be included and identified from each consortium member and labeled with both the locality and region (if applicable) identified. The guidelines will establish minimum performance targets. Applicants that received AEFLA funding in program year 2021-2022 must provide performance data required under WIOA section 116 to demonstrate effectiveness; applicants that did not receive AEFLA funds in program year 2021-2022 must provide data to demonstrate effectiveness in serving basic skills-deficient, eligible individuals, including evidence of success in achieving the minimum performance targets in the three content areas.

In their proposals, applicants must respond to all 13 considerations outlined in section 231(e), submit a program design, and provide plans for incorporating the priorities outlined

in the combined state plan. Further discussion of the requirements for the competition is described in the section of the plan titled, program-specific requirements for adult education and family literacy act programs.

The AEFLA funds are distributed based on federal guidelines. Of the basic award amount, no less than 82.5 percent must be distributed for local adult education activities under section 231 and 225, up to 12.5 percent may be used for state leadership projects, and up to five percent may be used for state administration. A set-aside amount for section 243, integrated English literacy and civics education, is identified within the full federal award. Five percent of this amount may be used for state administration and the remaining 95 percent distributed for local adult education activities.

The total funding amount for regional programs, including state contributions, is determined by a census-derived, needs-based formula that takes into account the number of adults in the region without a high school diploma or its equivalent. Funds are distributed according to this formula plus a base amount of operational funding to ensure equity for smaller or rural programs. The 22 adult education regions in the state correspond to the state's legislated planning districts and are aligned within Virginia's system of 14 local workforce areas. In some cases, adult education regions are congruent with local workforce development board areas; in other cases, multiple adult education regions operate within a single local workforce development board region. The three-year, competitive awards will be issued in 2023 using the 2016-2020 American community survey data to set the formula.

Continued funding is based on a grantee's success in demonstrating continuous improvement and meeting state performance benchmarks. VDOE's monitoring system allows grantees unable to meet the state's performance benchmarks to continue to receive funding with the expectation that probationary requirements must be met as a condition of continued funding.

ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers

The next competition for AEFLA funds will take place in the spring of 2023 to award providers for the 2023-2025 cycle. Eligible applicants for the Section 231 and 225 funds and state matching funds must submit applications to serve as fiscal agents for regional programs, to provide instruction at all six adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) educational functioning levels (EFLs) plus English language acquisition (ELA) activities and IELCE education where there is a demonstrated need. Regional programs must also deliver correctional education in regional or local facilities. Eligible applicants for Section 243 funds compete separately and are required to demonstrate a community need for the IELCE services. The regional structure ensures full coverage of the Commonwealth and involvement by all local school divisions as part of a regional Memorandum of Understanding.

VDOE, along with various partner agencies, ensures that identical grant announcements are made and widely distributed across the Commonwealth through a variety of venues and by a variety of methods, including postings on established listservs and social media. When the requests for proposals (RFPs) are ready for release, an official Notice of Availability

containing information about the availability of funds and the application process is published as a one-day, legal notice in total circulation in eight newspapers located in each of the eight superintendents' regions in Virginia. The RFP is posted on both the VDOE and the Virginia Grants websites for download. A public pre-proposal webinar is held after the public release of the RFP. Following the webinar, all inquiries about the competition or application process are managed as public information. Inquiries are accepted through a central email address, sorted into categories, researched, and answered in weekly sets posted to the VDOE adult education webpage. Each complete submission from an eligible applicant is reviewed on its individual merits and all submissions are evaluated using the same standard measures. Each LWDB is required to assign two or more members to review and score applications for their region, and these scores, along with the feedback, are taken into consideration by the external reviewers who serve on review panels.

C. Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

DARS receives 87 percent and DBVI receives 13 percent of Section 110 funds and any other federal formula grant funds available to the Commonwealth of Virginia for vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. DARS and DBVI work cooperatively to fully utilize all available federal funds. Either commissioner may request a renegotiation of the percentages at any time.

This distribution of funds between the two agencies is not grounded in policy or percentages of persons with disabilities in different populations as much as it is an historical approach that has not been adjusted over the years.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date. Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation

Currently, Virginia's core workforce programs operate on three different client data platforms. Virginia has begun implementation of the Virginia Career Works Common Access Referral Portal. The Portal provides a mechanism for common intake and affirmative referrals. The Portal seeks to reengineer a legacy state cross-agency and cross-program intake application that will result in a master client index across the various WIOA programs in Virginia. The Portal hopes to solve the inherent design limitations of the legacy systems with an emphasis on customer-centric design.

ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan

The Portal drives new traffic into the Virginia Career Works centers and reflects credibility by way of its quality design. It incentivizes clients to disclose information pertinent to accurate referrals by providing the rationale and benefit for each information request that will be specific to their directed need. The Portal is dedicated to increasing communication and efficiency, reducing duplication and waste, and achieving meaningful customer outcomes.

iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals

The Portal provides an integrated Virginia Career Works System referral process among the four WIOA Titles and includes TANF and SNAP E&T Services. Job seekers benefit from a single workforce system registration and request for services. The agency systems receive referral information to initiate intake appointments. Also, the Portal provides visibility into how a client has utilized resources available to them in the workforce system and the service outcomes. To regulate this effort, a governance board has been created chaired by the Governor's Chief Data Officer. This decision-making body consists of representatives from each agency that shares data or supports the system. The Board's mission is to provide direct oversight, leadership, and support for the continuous development of the system as well as use the collected data to review the performance of the workforce system through analytics.

iv. Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2))

Virginia has technology systems in place that serve as the system of record for the various WIOA core programs. These systems, such as the Virginia Workforce Connection provided by Geographic Solutions, capture, and report all activities related to participants served through Virginia's one-stop centers. These systems meet all federal reporting requirements including completing and submitting the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) reports.

The reports provided by the current systems are also used to inform the stakeholders, including the state and local workforce development boards, of performance results, including performance results in comparison to the performance measures established in this Combined State Plan for the various core programs.

Virginia is also in the process of implementing the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal that serves as the access portal to workforce development services for Virginians. The individuals seeking services complete online forms to provide information that return a referral to the appropriate program services that best meet their needs. The Portal serves as a data trust that reports service outcomes to stakeholders to enable strategy adjustments to improve service delivery across Virginia's workforce development system. This technology solution will serve all WIOA core programs as well as TANF and SNAP program services.

B. Assessment of Participants' Post-program Success

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Currently, each workforce program administrator evaluates its program in isolation to the other system partners. The direction for Virginia is clear, workforce programs will be evaluated (and by extension, the success of participants assessed) as a collective. Moving forward, Virginia will establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of the workforce development system as a whole. These metrics will include the number of system participants who got jobs, the length of time participants stayed in these jobs, and the wages of these jobs. These metrics will simplify the workforce system and allow state agencies to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs into employment.

C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Confidentiality and disclosure of wage records are governed by the regulations at 20 CFR Part 603. These regulations permit the VEC to enter into data sharing agreements with public officials in the performance of their public duties and stipulate the agreement terms, including safeguards and security requirements, payment of costs, and periodic audits conducted by the VEC. The VEC is prohibited from using grant funds to cover disclosure costs.

After a data sharing agreement is executed, the VEC creates an account on VEC's secure FTP server for secure transfers of the wage requests and wage results files. The wage results file includes wage and employer information along with NAIC codes at a cost of \$100 per file. Requests for wage record data are handled by VEC's Information Control unit.

The VEC intends to pursue UI Wage Record Agreements with neighboring states to improve the data sets supporting the outcomes of employment and wages. Additionally, the Commonwealth intends to integrate the UI Wage record system into the Workforce Data Trust for purposes of outcome assessment to the maximum extent allowable under state and federal law.

D. Privacy Safeguards

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

The Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) uses the Information Security Standard (SEC 501-09)[1], developed by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA), as the baseline for information security and risk management practices across the state. These baseline practices include, but are not limited to, agency regulatory requirements, information security best practices, and the criteria defined in SEC 501-09. VITA regularly reviews and updates the state Information Security Standard to ensure that information systems used to support COV agency data collection and reporting are sufficiently managed and protected, especially with respect to the collection and reporting of personal identifiable information (PII).

The state Information Security Standard was created using the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication 800-53 rev. 4, Recommended Security Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations, as a framework.

The COV Information Security Program consists of the following Control Families:

- AC - Access Control
- AT - Awareness and Training
- AU - Audit and Accountability
- CA - Security Assessment and Authorization
- CM - Configuration Management
- CP - Contingency Planning
- IA - Identification and Authentication
- IR - Incident Response
- MA – Maintenance
- MP - Media Protection
- PE - Physical and Environmental Protection
- PL – Planning
- PS - Personnel Security
- RA - Risk Assessment
- SA - System and Services Acquisition
- SC - System and Communications Protection
- SI - System and Information Integrity

- PM – Program Management

These component areas provide a framework of minimal requirements that agencies use to develop their agency information security programs with a goal of allowing agencies to accomplish their missions in a safe and secure environment. Each component listed above contains requirements that, together, comprise the Information Security Standard.

This Standard recognizes that agencies may procure IT equipment, systems, and services covered by this Standard from third parties. In such instances, Agency Heads remain accountable for maintaining compliance with this Standard and agencies must enforce these compliance requirements through documented agreements with third party providers and oversight of the services provided.

Each Agency Head is responsible for the security of the agency's IT systems and data. Each Agency Head must designate an Information Security Officer (ISO) for the agency, no less than biennially. An agency must have a Privacy Officer if required by law or regulation, such as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and may choose to have one where not required. Otherwise, these responsibilities are carried out by the ISO.

The Privacy Officer provides guidance on:

1. The requirements of state and federal Privacy laws, including but not limited to Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (34 CFR Part 99: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA))
2. Disclosure of and access to sensitive data, including PII
3. Security and protection requirements in conjunction with IT systems when there is some overlap among sensitivity, disclosure, privacy, and security issues

For wage records matching, each agency must enter into a Restricted Use Data Agreement (RUDA) with VEC. Because data matching requires the transmission and handling of PII, the RUDA identifies the security protocols with which the VEC and the agency requesting the data match must follow to conduct the data match, including the transmission of sensitive data between agencies.

[1] Commonwealth of Virginia Information Technology Resource Management – Information Security Standard

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

A. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor.

The Virginia workforce development system meets the veterans' priority of service provisions of federal law. To be eligible for priority of service, a veteran or eligible spouse must meet the "covered person" definition. A "covered person" is any of the following:

1. Veteran: A person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active service includes full-time service in the National Guard or Reserve component. This definition of "active service" does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (i.e., that which is often referred to as "weekend or "annual" training), nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel who are mobilized by State rather than Federal authorities (State mobilizations usually occur in response to events such as natural disasters).

2. Eligible Spouse: The spouse of any of the following individuals:

- a. Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability
- b. Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
 - i. Missing in action;
 - ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
 - iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power;
- c. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or
- d. Any veteran who died while a disability was in existence. A spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member veteran or service member, that eligibility would be lost upon divorce from the veteran or service member. (i.e., categories b. or c. above) would lose his or her eligibility if the veteran or service member were to lose the status that is the basis for the eligibility (e.g., if a veteran with a total service-connected disability were to receive a revised disability rating at a lower level). Similarly, for a spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member, that eligibility would be lost upon divorce from the veteran or service member.

3. Priority of Service: Priority of service means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training and placement provided under a qualified job training program. Priority means that veterans and eligible spouses are entitled to precedence over non-covered persons for services. This means that a veteran or an eligible spouse either receives access to a service earlier in time than a non-covered person or, if the resource is limited, the veteran or eligible spouse receives access to the service instead of or before the non-covered person. WIOA focuses on serving populations with barriers to employment. These priority populations include: recipients of public assistance; other low-income individuals; individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services. Basic skills deficient is defined as someone: a.) who is a youth, with English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; b.) who is a youth or adult, that is unable to

compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Priority of Service in relation to WIOA is provided using the following order:

1. First priority is to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals whose basic skills are deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
2. Second priority is given to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3. Third priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Fourth priority is given to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

WIOA Title I Programs: While veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs and services to include WIOA Title I Programs, the veteran or eligible spouse must still meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training programs. a. For income-based eligibility determinations, amounts paid while on active duty or paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for vocational rehabilitation, disability payments, or related VA-funded programs are not to be considered as income in accordance with federal law.

B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

The VBWD shall monitor compliance with veterans' priority of service and promote coordination of services to veterans through the Combined State Plan and coordination with appropriate state agencies.

Priority of Service for Veterans

The Veterans' Priority of Service policy can be accessed here:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-600-01-Veterans-Priority-of-Service-FinalSigned.pdf. The policy describes the definition of "covered person," and states that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training and placement provided under a qualified job training program

C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

Referral Process for Veterans Determined to have a Significant Barrier to Employment:

An eligible veteran or eligible spouse who is self-identified as having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) verified by Workforce Services Representative (WSR) or One Stop Partner staff should be referred to a DVOP specialist or, in instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, other trained staff.

1. At the one-stop center Point of Entry veterans and military spouses will be given an opportunity to self-identify as an eligible veteran or eligible spouse.
 - a. Posters will be displayed at entry providing instructions and explanation of Priority of Service and asking veterans and military spouses to self-identify to one-stop staff as such
 - b. Additionally, one-stop intake staff will ask if customers if they served in the military or were a spouse of someone who served in the military
2. one-stop intake staff complete greeting and ascertain reason for visit.
3. Identified veterans or military spouses will be assessed by the Workforce Services Representative (WSR) or a one-stop partner for meeting the further definition of eligibility of the JVSG program (eligibility for JVSG per U.S.C. 38 4211(4) and 4101(5) is different that eligibility for Priority of Service) and the additional presence of Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) or the belonging to a special population in accordance with Veteran Program Letters 03-19, 03-14, 03-14 Change 1 & 2 and Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-13, 19-13 Change 1& 2
4. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses identified with an SBE or belonging to a special population after being assessed by the WSR/WST or a one-stop Partner, will be enrolled into Wagner Peyser via the VaWC and then referred to the DVOP for services.
5. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses identified not having an SBE or not belonging to a special population or veterans and military spouses not meeting eligibility for the JVSG program after being assessed by the WSR/WST or a Virginia Career Works Center (WIOA) Partner, will also be enrolled into Wagner-Peyser via the VaWC and then referred to the appropriate one-stop partner for services.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

The Virginia Career Works Network will comply with the physical and programmatic accessibility provisions of section 188 of WIOA and applicable provisions of the ADA of 1990

through the development and implementation of statewide policies, including one-stop Certification, the continuing work of the statewide Accessibility Taskforce, the provision of training and support for staff in the Virginia Career Works Centers and their partner agencies, participation in grant opportunities targeted to individuals with disabilities, and through the evaluation of customer service, including for individuals with disabilities, as part of the continuous improvement process.

Statewide Policies

The VBWD has issued several statewide policies that positively impact accessibility in the one-stop centers and across the partner agencies. VBWD Policy 600-03, Change 1 Services to Individuals with Disabilities provides guidance to the Virginia public workforce system regarding the provision of services to individuals with disabilities through the one-stop system, in compliance with all requirements of WIOA. This policy can be found here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-600-03-Services-to-Individuals-with-Disabilities-Change-1.pdf. This policy provided the framework, requirements, and procedures for ensuring accessibility and accessible service delivery throughout the Virginia Career Works Network. The VBWD also issued policy 300-06, Change 1 one-stop Certification to provide requirements and procedures for certifying Virginia's comprehensive and affiliate workforce centers. This policy is available here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-06-Change-1-one-stop-Certification-Process-1.pdf. VBWD Policy 300-06, Change 1 includes the following criteria for accessibility compliance.

Evaluations of physical and programmatic accessibility must include how well the one-stop ensures equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to benefit from one-stop services. The American with Disabilities Act and WIOA Section 188 establish guiding standards. Evaluations of accessibility include:

- a. Provision of reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- b. Verification that reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures are made where necessary to avoid discrimination against persons with disabilities
- c. Administration of programs in the most integrated setting appropriate
- d. Communication with persons with disabilities is conducted as effectively as with others
- e. Provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, the program or activity
- f. Verify that programmatic and physical accessibility exists.
- g. Identify how services will be made available to customers outside regular business hours, including whether physical One-stop center access is available outside regular business hours
- h. There is at least one Title I staff member present at the one-stop center at all times during business hours

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- i. Regular business hours are clearly visible outside of the One-stop center building
 - j. The local Equal Opportunity Officer periodically reviews policies and procedures regarding accessibility and equal opportunity and provides staff training and updates
 - k. The required Equal Opportunity tagline is included on all documents 12. There is a process in place for customers to file Equal Opportunity complaints/grievances and a process for addressing these complaints/grievances when they are filed Verify that programmatic and physical accessibility exists.”

Implementation of VBWD Policy 300-06, Change1 one-stop Certification includes Attachment A: Virginia one-stop Certification Application, which provides the process and tool to use in the certification of Virginia’s comprehensive and affiliate workforce centers. This policy and its attachment details how Local Workforce Boards are to assess and ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of their facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. Moving forward, the VBWD will continue to update current policies and develop new policies as appropriate, to ensure the accessibility of the Virginia Career Works Centers and their partner agencies.

Accessibility Taskforce

Virginia also has an established statewide Accessibility Taskforce that has been convened regularly since 2017 to enhance accessibility of the Virginia Career Works Network and customer service experience and promote networking among state colleagues and agencies. The Taskforce’s approach to accessibility is inclusive and collaborative, incorporating universal design in its planning process. Two main principles guide the work of the Taskforce:

1. Access to the Virginia Career Works Network is everyone’s responsibility
2. Access to the Virginia Career Works Network is for everyone

The vision developed by the Accessibility Taskforce of an integrated and seamless network of service delivery that is welcoming and fully accessible to everyone, and where every individual has the opportunity to achieve their potential, is a key component of Virginia’s accessibility strategy.

The Taskforce is composed of diverse agency representatives including representatives from:

- Virginia Works Grants and Federal Workforce Programs Division for Title I
- EEO Officers for WIOA Titles I and Title III
- DARS, DBVI, and the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for Title IV
- VDOE Adult Education and Literacy for Title II
- VDSS, self-sufficiency programs (TANF, SNAP) as well as the Office of New Americans
- Virginia Association of Workforce Development Executive Directors

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- The local Virginia Career Works Centers and the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living
 - Representatives from Virginia's English Language Learner communities

The Task Force is co-led by the Titles I and II administrators, and the future intent is to rotate the leadership role through the partner agencies on a two-year cycle to enhance understanding of and support for system-wide accessibility across the myriad of disciplines involved.

Some of the major successes of the Accessibility Taskforce thus far include:

- Action Plan updated annually that lays out priorities, strategies, and action steps in four areas:
 - Universal access for all workforce system facilities
 - Policies and procedures
 - Training for all workforce partners
 - Communication and outreach for the workforce system
- Participating in the drafting of the VBWD Policies 600-03, Change 1 Services to Individuals with Disabilities and 300-06 one-stop Certification, which collectively support consistent compliance across all the WIOA core programs and partners
- Contributing directly to the one-stop center certification tool by developing specific criteria on Program and Programmatic Accessibility, and including the inclusion of universal design elements
- Engendering the partnership between the Virginia Works, DARS, and the Virginia Centers for Independent Living to conduct accessibility surveys of the comprehensive and affiliate workforce centers
- Actively participating in the one-stop center certification validation team's documentation and on-site reviews, which improved awareness and understanding of the ADA and disability challenges at the local one-stop center level, fostered technical assistance connections between state and local staff, and improved awareness and understanding among the state agencies on the Taskforce
- Supporting the addition of a "Joint Program Planning" Activity to the state Titles I and III shared system of record allowing case managers to formally recognize and track cross-partner co-case management functions
- Recent showcases include participating in the National Disability Institute's nationwide webinar "Lessons from the Field: Virginia's State Accessibility Taskforce" (September 2021)

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- Conducting a baseline survey of policy and progress in the LWDAs that support individuals with disabilities and English Language Learner populations (October 2021)
 - Supporting multiple state-wide and local training efforts to enhance understanding of, and interest in, providing accessible services throughout the one-stop service delivery continuum, including a focus in 2023 on digital skill building and digital opportunities. A focus in 2024 and beyond will be on services for individuals in substance use recovery and those who are justice-involved.
 - Promoting the Windmills® disability awareness training to all state workforce providers as a service provided by the Pathways grant awarded to DARS; over 1,000 practitioners had participated in these freely-available, online sessions as of January 2024.

Participation in Grant Opportunities Targeted to Individuals with Disabilities

Virginia has been fortunate to be awarded multiple rounds of the USDOL/ETA Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grants. Funds and technical assistance support have been used to:

- Increase identification of individuals with disabilities who self-disclose after program registration or enrollment
- Purchase universal workstations and other accessible hardware and software that increased access to individuals with disabilities to use resources and access programs
- Analyze system activities and implement a “Joint Service Planning” strategy, including a dedicated code in the state system of record, to allow for the recording and reporting of Integrated Resource Team activities for customers with multiple barriers to employment, including veterans and those with disabilities, who are receiving workforce system services from multiple partners
- Expand the capacity of the one-stop centers to promote the use of existing career pathways and focus on improvements needed to make their existing ‘career pathways’ systems fully inclusive of and accessible to individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 64
- Enactment of cross-agency partnerships (Virginia Works, DARS, VEC, VDOE, VDSS, LWDAs) to support regional disability awareness training at the local and regional levels
- Support the Six Virginia Teams who were selected to participate in Customer Centered Design Challenges
- Support USDOL/ETA’s choice of DEI Workforce Area 11 to join the “Future of One-stops” cohort to participate in an innovative curriculum designed to help teams reengineer services based on the needs of their worker and employer customers, along with peers across the nation

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- Develop a partnership with the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities grant to facilitate systems alignment, cross systems service delivery efforts, and co-enrollments with workforce partner programs
 - Support participation by key partners on DEI Workforce Area 11's Disability Services Subcommittee, which provides information and assists with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. This includes issues relating to compliance with Section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, in regards to: programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the Northern Virginia one-stop delivery system, as well as appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities.

As a result of Virginia's involvement in the DEI and other activities, Virginia was chosen by the LEAD/WIOA Policy Center for an Equal Opportunity Pilot project, starting in January of 2020. This project results from the LEAD technical assistance with the Virginia Accessibility Taskforce and is helping to implement actions and lessons learned from the EO conference, local area trainings and DEI strategies.

Virginia's accessibility implementation efforts have opened a cross-agency conversation that is taking the Commonwealth beyond a compliance checklist mentality to a focus on enhancing accessible service delivery across the Virginia Career Works Network. Moving forward, Virginia will continue to pursue additional opportunities to collaborate with federal, state, and local partners to enhance the Virginia Career Works infrastructure and Virginia's capabilities to provide high quality, accessible service delivery for individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth.

Evaluations of Customer Service

Virginia will continue to conduct continuous improvement for disability access through the evaluations of internal and external customer service feedback collection and analysis. Each of the 14 LWDBs have an external customer service evaluation process through which data is collected regarding customer service experiences for job seekers and businesses, which includes feedback opportunities regarding service to individuals with disabilities. The one-stop centers also have internal staff feedback processes that allow for identification and resolution of any issues identified by staff that may impact services provided to individuals with disabilities. Finally, each training that is provided offers an opportunity for staff feedback as well, providing a process for additional evaluation and improvement of service access and delivery for all customers, including individuals with disabilities.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware

of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

According to the U.S. Census (2018-2022 American Community Survey), 16.7 percent of people over age five residing in the Commonwealth, or over 1.3 million people, speak a language other than English in their home. The most commonly spoken languages other than English include Spanish, Chinese, including Mandarin and Cantonese, Korean, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. Each adult with limited English proficiency (LEP) will have meaningful access to all programs and services and will be able to participate effectively regardless of their ability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

The one-stop certification process and ongoing monitoring efforts document how one-stop centers address the needs of English language learners. One-stop centers' certification process includes a review of these assurances and supporting documents by the local workforce development boards as well as cross-agency document review and monitoring, conducted at all one-stop centers in 2020-2021.

LWDB plans require an access strategy as well as local policy guidance to ensure LEP individuals will have meaningful access to all programs and services and are able to participate effectively regardless of their ability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

Removing language barriers has been a sub-topic of the statewide Accessibility Taskforce, and as such, a topic of technical assistance, resource-sharing, professional development, and cross-agency training which will continue under the 2024-2027 Plan.

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Virginia recognizes the advantages of closer collaboration and coordination. Given the complexity of the workforce system, structured coordination and planning activities are imperatives. There are a number of current interactions between partners, and plans are in place to further strengthen the alignment of activities.

State Workforce Board Composition

The composition of the state workforce board is purposeful, designed to ensure cross-agency and cross-program alignment, and is a platform for joint planning and coordination between core and other programs. With cabinet-level representation by the Secretary of Labor and Secretaries of Commerce and Trade, Education, Health and Human Resources, as well as the chancellor of VCCS, the Board will strengthen its position as a hub for dialogue regarding overarching state strategies and policy. The Board meets quarterly to direct the strategic initiatives of the workforce system and discuss the implementation of the Combined State Plan goals and strategies. Representatives from the local workforce boards attend the state board meetings as well.

Virginia Works

At the state level, representatives from the key Combined State Plan partners (Virginia Works, VDOE, VEC, DARS, DBVI, VDSS) meet quarterly to coordinate the implementation of the CSP goals and strategies. Going forward, this team will include ad-hoc members of this team from other workforce-related agencies, including DJJ, DOC, and Veterans Services.

Regional Workforce Partners

We recognize that the real work happens in the field. No level of collaboration at the state level can replace strong regional collaboration. Virginia is beginning to explore how it can build capacity for partners to better identify and solve workforce challenges in local areas and to strengthen local workforce boards, especially in serving their role as a regional convener.

LWDBs meet frequently to implement the directions of the state board and collaborate with one-stop operators and other service delivery partners regularly to oversee implementation, solve problems, and direct strategic resources.

State and local workforce leadership will continue to hold monthly conference calls to discuss challenges and methods for overcoming those challenges to service delivery. These conference calls were started during the COVID-19 pandemic and all parties found these calls to be an effective method for efficient communication and collaboration. Going forward, state and local workforce leadership will collaborate in-person annually to identify key priorities for local service delivery, effective methods of implementation, and needed resources.

V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities Under Title I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State

The Commonwealth of Virginia has 14 Local Workforce Development areas. See the following link for a map of the regions and local workforce development areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia: www.virginiacareerworks.com/local-workforce-boards.

1. Southwest: Norton, Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise
2. New River/Mt. Rogers: Bristol, Galax, Radford, Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, Wythe
3. Greater Roanoke: Covington, Roanoke, Salem, Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Roanoke
4. Shenandoah Valley: Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Augusta, Bath, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren
5. Crater: Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, Sussex
6. Piedmont: Charlottesville, Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Rappahannock
7. Central: Bedford, Lynchburg, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell
8. South Central: Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward
9. Capital: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, City of Richmond
10. West Piedmont: Danville, Martinsville, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania
11. Northern: Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William
12. Alexandria/Arlington: Alexandria, Arlington

13. Bay Consortium: Fredericksburg, Accomack, Caroline, Essex, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland

14. Hampton Roads: Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Virginia Beach, Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg, Gloucester, James City, York

B. Describe the process and policy used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions

WIOA Section 106 identifies local area designation as a responsibility of the Governor which is to occur through consultation with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD), as well as local boards and chief elected officials. Identifying and designating regions is referenced as part of the development and continuous improvement process of workforce development systems in the state.

WIOA is clear that for the state to receive an allotment of funds the Governor shall approve requests for initial designation for any area in good standing that was designated as a local area for the purpose of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for a two-year period preceding the enactment of WIOA. This initial designation has been in place for the first two full program years following the date of enactment of WIOA.

The following is the process the Commonwealth of Virginia used in designating local areas:

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-01, Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas - www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-01-Designation-of-Local-Workforce-Development-Areas-Revision-1-Marked.pdf

Consistent with WIOA section 106(b)(4), the VBWD, in consultation with Local Boards and chief elected officials, reviews all requests for local workforce development area designation using established policies and procedures, and makes a recommendation to the Governor. In reviewing initial and subsequent designation requests, the State Board shall evaluate the extent that requested areas meet the following:

1. Are consistent with labor market areas in the state
2. Are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state
3. Have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under provisions of WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools

On March 3, 2015, the Governor’s Office, issued a letter inviting Chief Elected Officials (CEO) to submit requests for initial designation of the currently established local workforce areas.

All CEOs of the local workforce areas, as established under WIA, submitted requests, and were granted approval to remain as such under the initial designation period.

The procedures for designating local workforce development areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia are outlined as follows:

Initial Designation: For the first two full program years following the date of enactment of WIOA (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2018), the Governor shall approve a request for designation as a local workforce development area from any area that was designated as a local area for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for the 2-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act, performed successfully, and sustained fiscal integrity.

Subsequent Designation: After the period of Initial Designation, the Governor shall approve a request for Subsequent Designation as a local workforce development area from such local area, if such area:

1. Performed successfully
2. Sustained fiscal integrity
3. In the case of a local area in a planning region, met the requirements of local planning regions outlined in WIOA

Performed Successfully Defined: The term “performed successfully” means the local workforce development area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance described in WIOA section 116(b)(2)(A) (or, if applicable, core indicators of performance described in section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of this Act) for each of the last two consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance.

Fiscal Integrity Defined: The term “sustained fiscal integrity” means that the Secretary of Labor has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area improperly expended funds provided under subtitle B (or, if applicable, title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 as in effect prior to the effective date of such subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.

Requirements of Local Planning Regions: The VBWD will evaluate all requests for subsequent designation in accordance with policies, procedures, and guidance issued regarding planning region identification and participation by local workforce development areas.

Steps in the Virginia Local Workforce Development Area Designation Process

The process outlined below is to be followed by a unit or units of local government seeking designation of local workforce development areas under the WIOA, including requests for Initial and Subsequent Designation that meet the definitions outlined in the law.

Step 1. The local government unit(s) seeking designation of a local workforce development area(s) should coordinate and consult with the chief elected officials of the local areas (county commission for a single county local area or the consortium for multi-county local areas) and existing local workforce investment boards.

Step 2. If a decision is made by the local government unit(s), in coordination with the chief elected officials, to seek designation under the WIOA, the local government units must undertake a formal public comment period and provide documentation of the results of the formal public comment period with the designation request to partners, including existing local workforce investment boards. The formal comment period must allow for comments by businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and the public at large.

Step 3. The request for designation of a local workforce development area under the WIOA shall include the following information:

1. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with labor market areas including information on growth industries and occupations in the local labor market
2. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with a regional economic development area within the Commonwealth of Virginia
3. How the proposed local workforce development area can effectively administer activities under provisions of the WIOA with available federal and non-federal resources, including a description of area education and training providers, a description of how the available resources will be made available for training activities, and a description of the percentage of overall resources administered by the local area that will be dedicated to training activities
4. Whether the proposed local workforce development area is seeking Initial or Subsequent Designation as defined by WIOA and a statement of assurance that the proposed local workforce development area meets the requirements for Initial or Subsequent Designation under the WIOA
5. For Subsequent Designation requests, a discussion of how the local workforce development area met the three criteria outlined in WIOA section 106(b)(3)

Step 4. After submission of the designation request, the VBWD will review the request and provide a consultative opinion and recommendation for the Governor. As required by the WIOA, the Governor will use the consultation of the VBWD and consult with chief elected officials prior to designating local workforce development areas in Virginia. The Governor may rely on the submissions from the requestor(s) as meeting the requirement for consultation with chief elected officials, including the public records of meetings and any recorded votes or resolutions regarding the designation request.

Step 5a. Pursuant to WIOA section 106(b), the Governor formally designated local workforce development areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia for a two-year period beginning on July 1, 2015, and ending on June 30, 2017.

Step 5b. Pursuant to WIOA section 106(b), the Governor will subsequently designate local workforce development areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia for two-year periods, as appropriate.

Opportunity to Appeal: Pursuant to WIOA section 106(b)(5), a unit(s) of local government may submit an appeal to the VBWD. The appeal shall describe the reasons why the decision by the Governor should be reconsidered, with specific data being provided to back-up the appeal. After submission of an appeal, a final determination shall be made by the Governor, following a recommendation from the state workforce board within 30 calendar days.

Commonwealth of Virginia Process for Redesignating a LWDA

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-07 Process for Requesting Local Workforce Development Area Redesignation; Redesignation Assistance - www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-07-Process-for-Requesting-Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Redesignation.pdf

Consistent with WIOA section 106(b)(6), the VBWD will consider all requests for local area redesignation. While the WIOA statute contemplates requests for redesignation for local areas that are part of a planning region, the VBWD will consider requests for redesignation for local areas within a planning region and for local areas that may not be part of a planning region, but can provide other appropriate justification for the change. Justification for redesignation may include factors that demonstrate the extent that requested areas meet the following:

1. Are consistent with labor market areas in the state
2. Are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state
3. Have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under provisions of WIOA Title I, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools

Requests for redesignation and redesignation assistance shall be consistent with policies and procedures outlined in Policy 200-01 and Policy 200-06.

Procedures

Redesignation of local workforce development areas under the WIOA.

Step 1. The local government unit(s) seeking redesignation of local workforce development area(s) shall gain agreement of redesignation with the chief elected officials of the local areas (county commission for a single county local area or the consortium for multicounty local areas) impacted by the proposed redesignation and associated existing local workforce development boards.

Step 2. If a decision is made by the local government unit(s), in coordination with the chief elected officials, to seek redesignation under the WIOA, the local government units must undertake a formal comment period and provide documentation of the results of the formal

comment period with the redesignation request. The formal comment period must allow for comments by businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and the public at-large.

Step 3. The request for redesignation of a new local workforce development area under the WIOA shall include the following information:

1. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with labor market areas including information on growth industries and occupations in the local labor market
2. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with a regional economic development area within the Commonwealth of Virginia
3. How the proposed local workforce development area can effectively administer activities under provisions of the WIOA with available federal and non-federal resources, including a description of area education and training providers, a description of how the available resources will be made available for training activities, and a description of the percentage of overall resources administered by the local area that will be dedicated to training activities

Step 4. After submission of the redesignation request, the VBWD will review the request and provide a consultative opinion and recommendation for the Governor. As required by the WIOA, the Governor will use the consultation of the VBWD and consult with chief elected officials prior to redesignating a local workforce development area. The Governor may rely on the submissions from the requestor(s) as meeting the requirement for consultation with chief local elected officials, including the public records of meetings and any recorded votes or resolutions regarding the redesignation request.

Step 5. Along with the redesignation request, the applicant for redesignation shall also submit a request for redesignation assistance (if needing such assistance), along with a budget, and justification for the request that includes proposed activities to facilitate a transition to the redesignated local area. Transition assistance activities may include:

1. Convening sessions and conferences
2. Renegotiation of contracts and agreements
3. Other activities deemed appropriate for redesignation by the VBWD

Step 6. The VBWD and the WIOA title I administrative agency shall jointly consult on the redesignation assistance request and make a determination. The WIOA title I administrative agency shall monitor expenditure of funds and ensure appropriate use of such funds in supporting redesignation of the new local area(s).

Step 7. Once the Governor formally approves the redesignation request, redesignation funds shall be available based on an approved budget by the WIOA Title I administrative agency.

Commonwealth of Virginia Process for Identifying Regions

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-06, Designation of Regions and Planning Requirements - www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-06-Designation-of-Regions-and-Planning-Requirements-FINAL-Signed.pdf

To identify regions, WIOA requires the state to identify factors to be used, which, when applying, may or may not align to current local workforce development areas. In Virginia, the factors were used to promote a collaborative process whereby the data collection and analysis of the factors or determination of regions are shared between state and local workforce partners. Virginia utilized the following factors in determining regions: 1) Single Labor Market; 2) Common Economic Development Area; 3) Federal and Non-Federal Resources to Carry Out WIOA Activities; 4) Population Centers; 5) Commuting Patterns; 6) Industrial Composition and Sector Alignment; 7) Community College Regions.

Utilizing these seven factors, various regional alignments may be considered and proposed by a number of workforce system stakeholders such as state policymakers, State and Local Board members, state and local workforce staff, partner program staff, business and industry partners, and workforce and education associations. For Virginia to consider and designate regions, a formal proposal shall be submitted to the VBWD that includes a recommendation for region designation, a rationale for the region designation recommended using the seven factors, and a description of why the regional alignment proposed is in the best interests of the state, business and industry, and workers and job seekers.

C. Provide the appeals process and policy referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas

Opportunity to Appeal:

Pursuant to WIOA Section 106(b)(5), a unit(s) of local government may submit an appeal to the VBWD. The appeal shall contain:

- A written description on the reasoning behind why the government unit(s) should be designated as a local workforce development area, including data substantiating the reasoning;
- A written description of how this is in the best interest of the government unit(s), the local labor force, and the businesses in proposed region;
- A written, detailed reasoning detailing why designation with another region disadvantages the government unit(s), the local labor force, and businesses in currently designated regions;
- A written proposal for how the region would be structured to fulfill the needs of the government unit(s)
- After submission of the appeal, the VBWD will have 30 days to provide an initial response. Following this response, the government unit(s) making the appeal will have the ability to present their reasoning to the VBWD.
- After presenting to the VBWD, the VBWD will provide a vote to either support or reject the appeal. The chair will then provide a copy of the appeal along with the

VBWD's support for or rejection of the appeal for the Governor's consideration. The Governor at that time may either support the designation made by the governmental units or reject it. VBWD Policy 200-01 includes this appeals language.

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-01, Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas - www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-01-Designation-of-Local-Workforce-Development-Areas-Revision-1-Marked.pdf

D. Provide the appeals process and policy referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding

The Virginia Workforce Letter (VWL) 17-04, Virginia Career Works one-stop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Cost Allocation Development Guidance provides guidance on appeals relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

Per VWL 17-04, the LWDB Chair (or designee) must secure all partner signatures for the Cost Allocation MOU pertaining to infrastructure funding. The MOU, including the cost allocation plan, will be considered fully executed once all signatories have reviewed and signed, and a signed copy has been returned to all parties. A fully-executed MOU must be submitted annually to the WIOA Title I Administrator electronically at no later than May 31st.

If a partner is unwilling to sign the MOU, then the LWDB Chair (or designee) must ensure that the dispute resolution process established by the LWDB is followed. If the local dispute resolution process is exhausted, the WIOA Title I Administrator must be notified in writing via email. All actions taken to resolve the dispute must be documented in detail and included in the email. The WIOA Title I Administrator will address and respond in accordance with the applicable policies as referenced above.

Pursuant to WIOA Section 106(b)(5), a unit(s) of local government may submit an appeal to the VBWD. The appeal shall contain:

- A written description on the reasoning behind why the government unit(s) should be designated as a local workforce development area, including data substantiating the reasoning;
- A written description of how this is in the best interest of the government unit(s), the local labor force, and the businesses in proposed region;
- A written, detailed reasoning detailing why designation with another region disadvantages the government unit(s), the local labor force, and businesses in currently designated regions;
- A written proposal for how the region would be structured to fulfill the needs of the government unit(s)
- After submission of the appeal, the VBWD will have 30 days to provide an initial response. Following this response, the government unit(s) making the appeal will have the ability to present their reasoning to the VBWD.

- After presenting to the Board, the VBWD will provide a vote to either support or reject the appeal. The chair will then provide a copy of the appeal along with the VBWD's support for or rejection of the appeal for the Governor's consideration.

The Governor at that time may either support the designation made by the governmental units or reject it. VWL 17-04 was updated to include this appeals language.

Reference: VWL 17-04 Change 3, Virginia Career Works one-stop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Cost Allocation Development Guidance - www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-17-04-Change-3.pdf

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities

The Commonwealth has a process through the Virginia Career Works website and state code for policy development to affect Virginia's Workforce Development System. The Virginia Career Works website is structured to inform stakeholders of public policies that are promulgated by the VBWD and the Title I Administrator.

1. The VBWD policies provide direction for the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB). The VBWD assists and advises the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Secretary of Labor in meeting workforce development needs in Virginia. Policies for the statewide workforce development system are located on the Virginia Career Works website under the VBWD Policy section (<https://viriniacareerworks.com/practitioners-corner/#policies>).

Some of the key policies and guidelines for the Commonwealth of Virginia statewide workforce development system include the following:

a. VBWD Policy 200-01 Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas Revision 1.

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-01-Designation-of-Local-Workforce-Development-Areas-Revision-1-Marked.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to chief elected officials (CEOs) and Virginia Career Works system stakeholders regarding the process to be followed when a unit or a combination of units of general local government, such as a county or group of counties, requests designation of local workforce development areas under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

b. VBWD Policy 20-02 Membership, Responsibilities, and Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards.

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-20-02-Local-Workforce-Boards-w-Attachment-A.pdf

This policy provides guidance for the establishment and membership of Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), the responsibilities of the LWDB, and the certification of the

LWDB under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The policy rescinds and replaces Policies 200-02, 200-03, and 200-04.

c. VBWD Policy 200-06 Designation of Regions and Planning Requirements.

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-06-Designation-of-Regions-and-Planning-Requirements-FINAL-Signed.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for identifying regions and conducting regional planning for CEOs and Virginia workforce system stakeholders per statutory and regulatory requirements under the WIOA.

d. VBWD Policy 200-07 Process for Requesting Local Workforce Development Area Redesignation; Redesignation Assistance.

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-200-07-Process-for-Requesting-Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Redesignation-.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to CEOs, LWDB members, and Virginia Career Works system stakeholders regarding the process to be followed when a unit or a combination of units of political subdivisions, such as county or group of counties and/or cities, request redesignation of local workforce development areas under the WIOA and the opportunity for local redesignation assistance from the state WIOA Title I Agency, the Virginia Community College System.

e. VBWD Policy 300-06 Change 1: one-stop Certification Process

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-06-Change-1-one-stop-Certification-Process-1.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to establish the criteria for LWDBs to certify Virginia Career Works Centers. The goal is to assure that each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) has been determined to meet uniform certification standards, such that businesses and job seekers can expect to encounter a minimum baseline of quality services regardless of location. LWDB's must at minimum certify one Comprehensive Virginia Career Works Center in their areas. The criteria shall include and incorporate the following: 1) Evaluations of Effectiveness, 2) Evaluations of Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities to Evaluate Compliance Disability-related Regulations (physical, programmatic and communications accessibility), 3) Evaluations of Continuous Improvements, and 4) Quality Assurance. LWDBs, with the approval of their CEOs, may establish additional certification criteria beyond that designated by the VBWD. The VBWD and the LWDBs must review and update the Virginia Career Works Center criteria every two years as part of the Combined State Plan and Local Plan Modifications. The Virginia Career Works Center Certification process shall be monitored in accordance with established state and local monitoring policies and guidance documents.

f. VBWD Policy 404-01 Change 1 Identification of Eligible Training Providers

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-404-01-Change-1-ETPL-Policy-Approved.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to provide eligibility criteria for providers of training and their programs. This policy includes information and procedures for implementing the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) requirements in accordance to the WIOA of 2014.

g. VBWD Policy 600-01: Veterans' Priority of Service

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-600-01-Veterans-Priority-of-Service-FinalSigned.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to articulate veteran's priority of service requirements under the WIOA.

h. VBWD Policy 600-03 Change 1: Services to Individuals with Disabilities

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-600-03-Services-to-Individuals-with-Disabilities-Change-1.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Virginia public workforce system regarding the provision of services to individuals with disabilities through the Virginia Career Works system, in compliance with all requirements of the WIOA.

i. VBWD Policy 403-02: Rapid Response Activities: Layoff Aversion Assistance

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-403-02-Rapid-Response-Final.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the process for distribution of funding for dislocated worker services as part of Rapid Response strategies, including layoff aversion services, under the WIOA.

j. VBWD Policy 19-01: Mandatory WIOA Title I-Trade Co-Enrollment

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy .pdf

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the requirement for WIOA Title I and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Co-Enrollment for dislocated workers.

k. VBWD Policy 403-01 Change 1: Business Services Requirements

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-403-01-Business-Services-Requirements-Change-1.pdf

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategic vision of business service provision in the Commonwealth of Virginia and data collection requirements of LWDBs and American Job Centers (also called one-stop centers), which includes all mandated WIOA partners in providing services to business customers. This policy presents required actions of WIOA partners to create the capacity to provide business services and capture data on business services provided to business customers.

Virginia Workforce Letters (VWL) are administrative policy documents for LWDB issued by the Virginia Community College System, as the administrator of WIOA Title I for the

Commonwealth of Virginia. Guidance on the administration of the statewide workforce development system specific to Title I of the WIOA are located under Current Virginia Workforce Letters and Archived Virginia Workforce Letters sections on the Virginia Career Works website. www.virginiacareerworks.com/practitioners-corner/#letters

Some of the key administrative guidance documents for Virginia's statewide workforce development system include the following:

a. VWL 15-02, Change 2, Eligibility Guidelines.

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-15-02-Change-2.pdf

This administrative guidance document provides eligibility guidelines for the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs under the WIOA of 2014.

b. VWL 15-04 Methods of Administration.

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-15-04-Methods-of-Administration.pdf

This administrative guidance document provides a reasonable guarantee that all of Virginia's WIOA Title I financially assisted programs, activities and recipients comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements stipulated under Section 188 of the WIOA.

c. VWL 23-1 2023 Poverty Guidelines and 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Levels and Use of Economic Self-Sufficiency under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-23-01-2023-Poverty-Guidelines-70-Lower-Living-Standard-Income-Levels-Self-Sufficiency-Final-1.pdf

This administrative guidance document provides the current Poverty and 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Levels to be used in determining eligibility under the definition of low income.

d. VWL 14-17, Change 3: Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement.

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-14-17-Change-3-FINAL.pdf

In accordance with Code of Virginia §2.2-2472.2, this administrative guidance document provides the minimum Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local area formula funds expenditure requirement for training leading to recognized postsecondary education and workforce credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region. All LWDAs are required to ensure that at least 40 percent of their formula-allocated expenditures in a program year are expended on allowable training costs in the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This letter provides guidance on allowable costs towards meeting the required minimum 40 percent expenditure rate.

e. VWL 15-05 Change 1 WIOA Discrimination Complaint Process

www.virginiacareerworks.com/current_virginia/vwl-15-05-change-1-wioa-discrimination-complaint-process

The purpose of this document is to communicate the requirement of grant recipients to adopt and make public procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging violations of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provision of the WIOA.

f. VWL 20-08 Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Workforce Development Area Plans

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-20-08-Requirements-for-WIOA-Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Plans.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs with procedures and guidance on development and submission of local area plans under Title I of the WIOA.

g. VWL 16-02 Change 1 Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-02-change-1-Local-Area-WIOA-Funds-Transfer-Procedures-Final.pdf

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedure for initiating a request to transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker streams under a particular allocation cycle by LWDBs.

h. VWL 20-07 Change 2: VaWC and Electronic Case Files

This workforce letter provides Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and their service providers guidance regarding the uniform electronic documentation of participant records, required naming conventions for participant documents uploaded into the system of record, adding and removing of participant documents to the system, standards for case note quality, and timely data entry requirements.

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-20-07-Change-2-VaWC-and-Electronic-Case-Files-Final.pdf

i. VWL 16-05, Change 2 Incumbent Worker Training

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-05-Change-2-Incumbent-Worker-Training.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs with procedures and guidance on Incumbent Worker Training requirements, appropriate data entry, and performance measure reporting. This guidance applies to incumbent worker training programs that receive funding through incumbent worker training contracts with an employer that are supported by the WIOA Title I-B statewide and local formula funds to training adults and dislocated workers, including those with disabilities.

j. VWL 16-06, Change 1 Eligible Training Provider and Programs List

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-06-Change-1-ETPL-7-13-2017Final.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs with procedures and guidance on eligibility requirements for Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and the programs they offer.

This letter provides additional information on ETP program performance measurement and reporting. This guidance applies to all state-approved ETPs and their state-approved programs that receive funding through Individual Training Account services (ITAs) supported by the WIOA Title I-B funds to train adults and dislocated workers, including those with disabilities.

k. VWL 16-07 Program Income

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-07-Program-Income.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on reporting program income and meeting cash expenditure requirements under the WIOA.

l. VWL 16-08 Change 1 Equipment Management-Acquisition, Inventory, and Disposition

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-08-change-1-Equipment-Management-Acquisition-Inventory-and-Disposition-Final.pdf

The purpose of this document is to communicate requirements and procedures for the acquisition, inventory, and disposition of equipment.

m. VWL 16-09 Change 1 WIOA Grievance and Complaint Process

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-09-Change-1-WIOA-Program-Grievance-and-Complaint-Processing.pdf

The purpose of this document is to communicate the requirement of grant recipients to establish and maintain procedures providing for the prompt investigation and equitable resolution of grievances and complaints alleging violations of the WIOA.

n. VWL 16-11 Youth in Need of Additional Assistance and In-School Youth 5% Limitation Barrier

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-11-Youth-in-Need-of-Additional-Assistance-5-Limitation-Barrier.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide local workforce areas with guidance regarding the use of Youth in Need of Additional Assistance as a barrier for In-School Youth (ISY) and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Programs. The document also provides guidance on the use of the Five Percent (5 percent) Limitation when determining eligibility of In-School Youth (ISY) program services under Title I of the WIOA.

o. VWL 16-12 5% Income Exception for WIOA Youth Programs

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-12-Five-Percent-Income-Exception-for-WIOA-Youth-Programs.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs and partners guidance on the use of the five percent (5 percent) income exception for youth participants in accordance to the WIOA.

p. VWL 17-05 Application for Statewide Rapid Response Funds

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-17-05-Application-for-Statewide-Rapid-Response-Funds.pdf

The purpose of this document is to communicate application procedures and requirements for the request of Statewide Rapid Response funds for Dislocated Worker Services and Layoff Aversion Services.

q. VWL 18-04, Change 3 Priority of Service

www.virginiacareerworks.com/current_virginia/vwl-18-04-change-3-priority-of-service/

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs guidance on serving individuals under the Priority of Service requirements in accordance with the WIOA.

r. VWL 19-02 WIOA Title I Waiver for the Out of School Youth 75% Expenditure Requirement

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-19-02-WIOA-Title-I-Waiver-for-the-Out-of-School-Youth-75-Expenditure-Requirement-Signed.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs guidance for implementing the Commonwealth of Virginia's approved waiver for the WIOA Title I Youth 75 percent expenditure requirement.

s. VWL 19-06, Change 1 Oversight and Monitoring

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-19-06-Change-1-Oversight-and-Monitoring.pdf

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to LWDAs regarding the requirements for monitoring, oversight, and evaluation necessary to ensure compliance with the WIOA, applicable Federal laws and regulations, and state and local guidance.

B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding for mandatory and discretionary activities, including how the State will conduct evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities.

Governor's set-aside funds will generally be used to fund the administration of WIOA Title I, including program development activities, technology systems to meet performance and participant services reporting requirements, and oversight/monitoring activities specific to WIOA Title I.

The set-aside funds will also be used for the following:

1. Promote the Governor's vision and goals through strategic investments in Virginia's workforce development system operations, capacity, and infrastructure
2. Provide competitive grant award opportunities to build capacity across the workforce system and drive enhanced partnership
3. Evaluate program performance and efficacy to enable the optimization of service delivery
4. Support the required operations of the VBWD

C. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers.

The WIOA Title I Administrator has developed a process to manage and quickly respond to mass layoffs, closings and potential closings that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals in a given workforce development area. This process begins with state-coordinated rapid response activities. Upon receipt of notification of a plant closing or substantial/mass layoff, the state Rapid Response team or Rapid Response Regional Coordinator will notify the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of the activity. The Rapid Response team works with the affected company to gather information regarding the impacted population.

Using this information, Rapid Response staff, along with the LWDB or its designee(s), develops a plan of action for Rapid Response and other services available from the Virginia Career Works Centers, VCCS, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and other state and local programs. This plan may include aversion strategies and a schedule to provide onsite services (such as job fairs, resume and interviewing workshops) to the laid-off workers by the Rapid Response team. In developing this plan, it may become apparent that a majority of the targeted population may have serious barriers to re-employment that will require intensive and training services. If this is the case, Title I Administration Team staff will work with the local board to determine whether adequate resources exist to serve the additional dislocated worker population with the available WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker formula funding allocated to the LWDA, or other resources, such as those from partner programs within the Virginia Career Works System, the surrounding community, the company or companies involved, or unions. In the event that funds from other sources are determined insufficient to cover the anticipated cost of the services, the Governor's Secretary of Labor will consider, pending availability, the awarding of funding from the state Rapid Response resources using the Rapid Response Fund Application process per VWL 17-05.

Virginia's focus is on averting layoffs through rapid reemployment activities. To achieve the goal of rapid reemployment, additional staff and technology supports are being utilized to better connect impacted workers with open positions close to their homes that match their previous employment or other transferable skills. This investment strategy of Rapid Response funds is intended to help facilitate the connection between dislocated workers and open positions to minimize the amount of unemployment experienced and document the potential savings to Virginia's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Layoff aversion strategies implemented to address at risk companies and workers

Layoff aversion strategies that have been implemented to address at risk companies and workers include using an early warning system (e.g. economic forecasting groups) to identify and track firms and industrial sectors that may be in trouble or benefit from early economic development assistance; provide pre-feasibility studies to assess whether it is possible to continue the business operation and under what conditions; promote incumbent worker training; and collaboration with partners for technical assistance (e.g. Small Business

Development Centers, Trade Adjustment Assistance Center, etc.). These strategies are outlined in the following link: <https://virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-403-02-Rapid-Response-Final.pdf>.

In regards to the incumbent worker training strategy, the state has issued policy establishing guidelines for the local boards to reserve and use up to 20 percent of the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds allocated to the LWDA to pay for the federal share of the cost of providing a training program for incumbent workers. This policy information is located in VBWD 403-04 Incumbent Worker Training policy and the supporting VWL 16-05, Change 2.

www.virginiacareerworks.com/current_virginia/vwl-16-05-change-2-incumbent-worker-training

D. Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

Virginia's Rapid Response system for responding to disaster situations is integrated in Virginia Works disaster response framework. When disasters strike, Virginia Works coordinates with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) in executing a response. This includes assisting individuals who need to file for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. Given that work sites may be impacted by the disaster, ~~VEC~~ Virginia Works will work with community partners to find alternate locations to assist in providing information and services to employees.

Relationships have been made by local Rapid Response Coordinators with their VDEM Regional offices so they know who to contact in the event of a disaster and can integrate into the larger response framework being executed by VDEM. Regional contact phone trees have been established to ensure that contact can be maintained between program partners in the event that prolonged closures keep workforce partners out of their work offices. If needed, Virginia will work closely with workforce partners and the LWDB(s) to apply for funding through the National Dislocated Worker Grants to assist the impacted communities.

E. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) AND ENSURES THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A) AND TAA SECTION 221(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION AND HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICE TO WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE PETITION (TAA SEC. 221(A)(2)(A)).

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015 (TAARA 2015) (Pub. L. 114-27), at Section 406, terminated the TAA Program on July 1, 2022. This termination is not a cliff termination, but rather a phase-out termination. The termination provisions prohibit the Department from investigating or certifying petitions for TAA. However, States are required to continue to provide workers access to the benefits and services of the TAA Program and encouraged to continue to conduct outreach to eligible workers. Although reauthorization has taken longer than anticipated, the Department continues to support the Administration and Congress in their efforts to reauthorize the TAA Program. (TEGL 07-23)

Virginia provides early intervention on behalf of those workers for which a TAA petition has been filed. This process begins with state-coordinated rapid response activities. Upon receipt of notification of a facility closure or substantial/mass layoff or potentially TAA affected worker group, the state Rapid Response team or Rapid Response Regional Coordinator will notify the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of the activity. The Rapid Response team (VEG (which includes TAA), Economic Development, and LWDB)-will work with the affected company to gather information regarding the impacted population.

Using this information, the Rapid Response team, along with the LWDB or its designee(s), will develop a plan of action for Rapid Response and other services available from the Virginia Career Works Centers (including TAA services), Virginia Works, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and other state and local programs. This plan may include aversion strategies and a schedule to provide onsite or virtual services (such as job fairs, resume and interviewing workshops) to the laid-off workers or potentially TAA affected workers by the Rapid Response team. In developing this plan, it may become apparent that a majority of the targeted population may have serious barriers to reemployment that will require basic and individualized career services. Trade Navigators attend these meetings and assist the companies in filing TAA Petitions.

How Virginia disseminates benefit information

The Rapid Response team provides an overview of the Trade Act Program to all businesses served. Virginia Works, which coordinates Rapid Response Services and administers the Trade Act Program, provides briefings delivered to management and dislocated workers, including potentially affected TAA workgroups. In this briefing, the TAA representative and/or Rapid Response Representative explains resources and TAA benefits available. The inclusion of Virginia Works provides an immediate connection to Trade Act Program benefits and services. Once a TAA petition is certified, Virginia Works collaborates with the trade-affected employer obtaining a separation list of those workers attached to the certification that have suffered a lack of work separation due to no fault of their own. Written notices via mail or email are sent to all appearing on the separation list informing them of upcoming informational sessions concerning benefits under services under TAA or if a direct contact is needed providing the link to a TAA Case Manager. The separation list is also used by TAA Case Management for aggressive outreach to those affected to ensure all have a full understanding of the program answering/addressing any questions or concerns that the TAW might have about TAA and giving encouragement to enroll into the program.

For worker groups on whose behalf a TAA has been filed, the Commonwealth of Virginia provides early intervention to potentially trade-affected worker groups who meet the WIOA definition of dislocated workers. These individuals may receive services through the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program and other Virginia Career Works partner programs, as appropriate, prior to their certification of eligibility to apply for benefits and services under the Trade Act programs. This early intervention is mandated within the law as defined in the TAA Final Rule of September 21, 2020, in addition to state policy found in VBWD 19-01 Mandatory WIOA Title I-Trade Co-enrollment.

According to VBWD Policy 19-01, “A majority of the individuals who may be covered in a Trade Petition will likely qualify for services from the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program as outlined in VWL #15-02, Change 2: Eligibility Guidelines. The provision of WIOA services should not be delayed while a TAA certification is pending. There may be cases where a potentially TAA eligible individual may not be eligible for WIOA Title I services due to selective services status and these cases should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.” Therefore, if a worker has been dislocated and is waiting for TAA eligibility determination, that person can be enrolled as a dislocated worker and receive eligible services under WIOA Title I. These services may include Career Services (Basic, Individualized, and Follow-up Services) as defined by WIOA.

To ensure better communication about potential TAA activity to staff in the field, Virginia Works will maintain clear and prompt internal communications on all TAA petitions filed, certified, or denied. WIOA Title I staff distributes this information to the appropriate LWDBs to share with their staff.

WIOA Title I and TAA have regular communication to ensure that co-enrollment is occurring by having weekly referrals of TAA impacted workers taking advantage of benefits to the appropriate local workforce development board. Referrals are provided to the State Rapid Response Coordinator, who ensures that the referrals are passed along to LWDB Executive Directors and other designees for case evaluation and co-enrollment.

How Virginia ensures the provision of appropriate career services to workers in the groups identified in TAA petition

Dislocated workers determined TAA eligible must be co-enrolled in TAA. The Virginia Co-Enrollment Directive as described in VBWD Policy 19-01 provides early intervention to assist Dislocated Worker eligible and potential TAA eligible individuals. The policy is available at [www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy .pdf](http://www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy.pdf). The TAA Final Rule of September 21, 2020 mandates co-enrollment of all Trade Affected Workers unless services and benefits are declined by a TAW or if a TAW’s selective services status is of question.

According to VBWD Policy 19-01, if an individual has already been identified as Trade-eligible and/or is in receipt of their Trade entitlement letter, they shall be co-enrolled in the WIOA dislocated worker program for receipt of intensive services, beginning with formal assessment. Through case management and staff coordination, the TAA will be responsible for training and then WIOA and/or Labor Exchange will handle post-training placement, with

WIOA case managers also ensuring required follow up services. This should not result in a participant being aware that they are being transferred from and among separate programs, but rather, be accomplished through case management, partner staff coordination, and staff management and tracking of funding sources being used.

Documentation of participation in a Rapid Response event is provided to all participants who attend either Rapid Response services or a Trade Benefits Rights Interview. This additional information helps expedite the eligibility for WIOA Dislocated Worker services as well as the co-enrollment process with the Trade program. Virginia Career Works staff have been trained not to wait for the completion of the Trade petition investigation before serving the potentially Trade certified worker, because the petition investigation may take up to 40 days or longer for DOL to complete, with another five weeks after employer certification for workers eligibility to be determined. Individuals who have lost their job or received notice of a pending lay off, are first and foremost dislocated workers and should be served as such.

At a minimum, the following are to be provided, along with standard basic services provided at the Virginia Career Works Center including:

1. Assessment
2. Provision of labor market information
3. Training providers available on the WIOA eligible training provider list

The Commonwealth is taking further steps to strengthen partnership for the provision of services across all WIOA programs by providing training on a regular basis to front line staff and follow up with LWDBs. This will continue to include emphasizing co-enrollment and eliminating duplicate services for delivery of seamless services to DLW/TAW.

The TAA program is a required partner in the one-stop delivery system, established under section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Therefore, given that the TAA program is part of the broader workforce system and a key goal for the TAA program is to ensure that trade-affected workers are able to successfully return to work. Consistent with the Governor-Secretary Agreement, the States agree to use funds obligated under the TAA Annual Cooperative Financial Agreement (CFA), to carry out the TAA program, including:

1. Ensuring integration of the TAA program into its one-stop delivery system
2. Using the centers in this system or network as the main point of participant intake and delivery of TAA program benefits and services
3. Ensuring the terms of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Workforce Investment Boards, as established under WIOA section 121(c) will apply to the assistance provided by other one-stop partners to TAA participants. [Trade Act Sec. 239 (a) as amended by WIOA section 512 (hh)]

How Virginia will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition

Rapid Response services are delivered during all Trade Benefit Orientations to ensure compliance with TAA Section 221(a)(1)(A). The Rapid Response funds, pending availability, is utilized to provide assistance to local workforce areas in situations where the layoff event results in a need beyond the availability of local resources, including TAA assistance. The VBWD Policy 403-02, Process for Additional Funding for Dislocated Worker Activities, provides the process for the distribution of additional funding for dislocated worker services funded by Rapid Response and other non-local formula funding.

VBWD Policy 403-02 communicates the Commonwealth's policy regarding the process for distribution of additional funding for dislocated worker services funded by Rapid Response and other non-local formula funding; and addresses when and how Rapid Response Funds will be made available to local workforce development areas impacted by plant closings and major dislocations. The process is as follows:

The Rapid Response Team will work with the LWDB in developing a plan/strategy to provide onsite or online services to the laid-off workers (including worker groups that files a TAA petition). In developing this plan, it may become apparent that a majority of the targeted population may have serious barriers to re-employment that will require intensive and training services. If this is the case, the LWDB may apply for funds under the process outlined in VWL 17-05: Application for Statewide Rapid Response Funds. Once the application is received, the WIOA Title I Administrator must review the application within 10 business days and provide an initial response to the LWDB. Virginia Works reviews the information provided, as well as other relevant documentation including fiscal and participant reports. Factors such as the timing of the layoffs, the size of the dislocation, the needs of the affected workers and the amount of funds available determine whether the projected funding will meet the Statewide Rapid Response (25 percent) funds, or some other federal funding.

The following conditions are taken into consideration during the review process:

1. The need for funds must be caused by either a plant closing or major layoff for which the company issued a WARN notification, the closing of an emergency nature where WARN notification was not possible, or be due to a significant increase in the number of unemployed individuals in the area that can otherwise be documented. Funds may also be made available to support TAA co-enrollment when TAA activity is higher than what may be usually accommodated under the usual formula funding available to LWDBs.
2. The need must occur at a time when the affected LWDBs formula funding and other accessible resources are not available or will not become available in the near future and the size of the dislocation must warrant additional funding. Efforts to secure other sources of funding sufficient to meet the need must be documented as unsuccessful.
3. The need must also be based on projections on the levels and types of services necessary, based in part on an assessment of the ability for the target population to be rapidly re-employed prior to intensive and training services and a determination that a large percentage of the affected workforce has barriers to employment.

After questions or issues with an application are addressed, the WIOA Title I Administrator makes a recommendation to the Governor's Office which then provides authorization to release the funds if necessary. Once a decision has been made, the Local Workforce Development Board is notified in writing. At that time, additional information and/or planning documents may be requested, as appropriate, based upon the selected source of funds.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Assurances

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is a Required Partner in the one-stop system, established under section 121 of WIOA. However, to receive TAA program funds, States must adhere to the signed Governor-Secretary Agreement, in addition to the terms and conditions provided in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Annual Cooperative Financial Agreement (CFA) and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Annual Funding Agreement, executed each fiscal year between the State and ETA.

The CFA, which is incorporated by reference into the Governor-Secretary Agreement, explains program requirements, limitations on the use of funds, assurances and other important grant provisions that States must follow to receive TAA program funding for Training and Other Activities (which includes training, employment and case management services, and allowances for job search and relocation and State administration of these benefits and services).

At the beginning of each fiscal year, ETA provides each Cooperating State Agency (CSA) with a CFA for that year, which the CSA is required to execute and submit to ETA's Office of Grants Management. The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Annual Funding Agreement is the mechanism for funding the State administration of TRA and older worker wage subsidies through the State agency that administers the unemployment insurance laws for the State.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the state is utilizing work-based training models (e.g., on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the state's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Virginia is committed to providing various work-based training models as a strategy to prepare job seekers for the needs of businesses. Improving the education and skill levels of the current workforce (through on-the-job and incumbent worker training) will improve state and local economies and increase the ability of businesses to effectively compete in the global market. It is imperative for Virginia to promote a highly-skilled and job ready workforce that meets the needs of employers.

The use of high-quality work-based training models (e.g., On-the Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) and Registered Apprenticeship) is supported throughout the Commonwealth's workforce policy and guidance documents. Virginia is pursuing work-based training models that meet the needs of high growth, in-demand industries and the needs of job seekers. Participants in work-based training hone existing skills, learn new skills and technologies and gain experience, resulting in the ability to earn higher wages and be promoted along a career pathway. Employers benefit from the value added that the work-based participant brings to the position.

In cases where WIOA ITAs are used, high quality training for both the participant and the employer is ensured by having an eligible training provider process (with eligibility criteria and an approval process to be on the State's Eligible Training Provider Programs List) that includes performance accountability and continuous improvement. The Eligible Training Provider Process is located in VBWD Policy 404-01 Change 1 Identification of Eligible Training Providers. This policy states that eligible training provider program criteria are developed to ensure that programs on the ETPL meet the minimum quality standards and deliver industry-recognized skills and credentials that provide individuals with opportunity for career progression. The policy also describes that performance criteria must be met in order to receive funding under WIOA. VBWD Policy 404-01 Change 1 Identification of Eligible Training Providers also details that the LWDBs are responsible for identifying their criteria for selecting work-based training contractors in local policy and any performance information required by the state will be specified in the policies for those types of training.

For example, VBWD Policy 403-04 Incumbent Worker Training, describes the use of WIOA statewide and local formula funding to create incumbent worker training programs. VBWD Policy 403-04 Incumbent Worker Training specifically addresses the means to achieve high quality training that meets the needs of both the participant and the employer. As stated in the policy, incumbent worker training is an important business services initiative that is designed to benefit business and industry by assisting with existing employees' skill development and by increasing employee productivity and company growth. LWDBs must detail incumbent worker training in the business services plan and incumbent worker training will be tracked in the business engagement report and will be reported to the VBWD. Strategies for developing new workforce skills in the existing workforce shall be designed to benefit business and industry in ways that encourage and support the integration of new technology and business processes, increase employee productivity, and support the competitiveness of the company.

VBWD Policy 403-03 Change 1 On-the-Job Training describes the use of WIOA funds for OJT. VBWD Policy 403-03 Change 1 On-the-Job Training describes how OJT may be utilized to benefit business and industry in ways that encourage and support the integration of new technology and business processes, increase employee productivity, and support the competitiveness of the company. Performance measures the VBWD will be monitoring include the number of participants engaged in OJT and other work-based learning, number of companies participating in OJT or other forms of work-based learning, number of workforce credentials earned, number of participants still employed six months after the end of the OJT

or other work-based learning, and the number of participants with a change in wages after six months.

Consistent follow-up by the LWDAs ensures that quality work-based training needs of both the employer and the participant are met. Each local WDA has a plan that recognizes the in-demand industries/occupations for the area. Quality delivery of business services is a principle tenant of the local efforts, in addition to providing job seekers with quality training that results in stackable credentials and career pathway progression. Additionally, the Commonwealth is continuously looking for ways to assist the LWDs by providing professional training and technical assistance opportunities on leveraging relationships with employers, improving outreach, standardizing processes, and ensuring participants are job ready before they enter the work-based employment opportunity. Finally, Virginia is committed to incorporating work-based training strategies into future workforce development grant initiatives. Virginia will continue to leverage grants as an opportunity to develop initiatives that enhance the quality and method of delivery of services through work-based learning activities. Additionally, these new strategies will be consistent with the purpose statement of WIOA under Section 2(6), including establishing credential attainment as a critical element and key outcome of all training activities.

References:

VDWD Policy Number 19-01, Mandatory Trade Co-enrollment:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy.pdf

VBWD Policy Number 403-04, Incumbent Worker Training:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-403-04-Incumbent-Worker-Training-FINALSigned.pdf

VBWD Policy Number 404-01 Change 1, Identification of Eligible Training Providers:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/virginia-board/vbwd-policy-404-01-change-1-eligible-training-provider-list/

VBWD Policy Number 403-03 Change 1, On-the-Job Training:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/virginia-board/vbwd-policy-403-03-change-1-on-the-job-training/

VBWD Strategic Plan 2020-2023: Building a Workforce System that Works for Virginia:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Final-VBWD-Strategic-Plan-2020-2023.pdf

Opportunity 2027 Strategic Plan (VCCS): www.vccs.edu/opportunity-2027-strategic-plan/

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the state will incorporate registered apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).

The Virginia strategy for registered apprenticeship service design and delivery involves referrals from workforce partners (e.g., workforce centers, case managers from DARS, VDSS, and workforce practitioners from the VCCS Workforce side) to Virginia Works HQ or to the Registered Apprenticeship Consultant that serves that locality.

Virginia is expanding the use of the Registered Apprenticeship program to help narrow the skills gap. Work-based learning is known to be an effective talent development strategy that serves the interests of business and the apprentice. Registered Apprenticeship opportunities have long been a part of Virginia's workforce training landscape. Apprenticeships employ a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction to produce highly skilled workers to help Virginia's employers grow the economy. Today there are more than 12,000 apprentices employed by 1,700 sponsors throughout the Commonwealth.

Virginia will continue to incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its services and strategies via increased collaboration with core partners, increased collaboration with core programs, establishing new policies and increased funding resources. The goal of these strategies is to increase the utilization of apprenticeship programs in the Commonwealth.

Increased Collaboration with Core Partners:

Virginia's Registered Apprenticeship programs are administered by Virginia Works through a network of regional service offices and technical outreach staff. At the LWDB level, Business Service Teams are the organizing structure used to engage business and industry and deliver workforce services to industry partners. RA representatives are vital members of the LWDB business service teams and also work in partnership with other system partners (e.g., Department of Rehabilitative Services and Department of Education) to support their sponsor businesses and registered apprentices. Virginia Works and the LWDB Business Service teams will collaborate and work in tandem identifying Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

Additionally, Registered Apprenticeships are incorporated into Virginia's strategy and services via Virginia Works participation on the State's WIOA Implementation Team and other strategic Workforce Development Committees. The Commonwealth is taking further steps to strengthen partnership between Title I and Registered Apprenticeship programs. This will include continuing to make each team aware of the programs offered and providing more coordinated services to businesses.

Registered Apprenticeship staff will provide outreach to the LWDB to train/partner with business service teams on the benefits and promotion of apprenticeship as a viable training option for employers. The training for Business Services Team members is intended to provide members with a foundational understanding of Registered Apprenticeship. An informal survey of workforce partners indicated that many were unaware of basic elements of Registered Apprenticeship which in turn limited the likelihood that Registered Apprenticeship was discussed with either businesses or job seeking clients. Ongoing training and interaction between Business Services Team members and Registered Apprenticeship Staff is necessary to build the required knowledge base for members to successfully identify opportunities to promote Registered Apprenticeship. Business service teams will use their

training to inform employers about apprenticeship opportunities, and in turn business service team members will forward information from interested employers to Registered Apprenticeship staff, who will follow-up on the leads to help employers create or expand Registered Apprenticeship programs.

The LWDBs will strengthen and increase its partnership with the Registered Apprenticeship program through its collaboration with the business services team, the coordination of ITAs with Work-based learning Programs, working with one-stop Services team in providing supportive services with clients, and identifying opportunities to engage businesses about Workforce Development Services and Registered Apprenticeships.

Under the Coordinating Strategies Section of the State Strategy, Virginia stated it will “Employ Relevant and Effective Talent Development Strategies.” Effective talent development strategies can take many forms. Virginia will expand, support and engage the business community in supported work-based learning efforts, like Registered Apprenticeship, on the job training and incumbent worker training.

The state workforce board has established policy (VBWD Policy 404-02, Change 1) related to the inclusion of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) in the state’s Eligible Training Provider List to ensure that Individual Training Accounts can be used. Individual Training Accounts funded through Title I-B can support apprenticeship RTI and work-based training for a broad range of occupations and industries. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are available for individual registered apprentices and can cover the amount allowable in a local workforce investment area for job-related instruction costs (e.g., classroom instruction, distance/online learning, etc.) for eligible dislocated workers or employed workers determined to be in need of training according to their local Comprehensive one-stop Career Center’s policies.

Incumbent Worker Training is a mechanism often used to support apprenticeship related instruction for newly hired and existing workers. Local boards may reserve and use up to 20 percent of the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to pay for a tiered scale portion of the costs of providing training.

Provision of additional recruiting, placement, and support services is an area of opportunity to increase collaboration with Registered Apprenticeship. The workforce system covers a range of supportive services – including pre-apprenticeship training, assistance in recruiting and placing apprentices, and tools, books, and other individual supplies for apprentices.

Virginia will work with the LWDBs to optimize the use of resources (ITA, support services) in supporting Registered Apprenticeships through appropriate referrals to the RA team and funding ITAs and OJTs if applicable.

Policy: The state workforce board adopted policy related to the inclusion of Registered Apprenticeship sponsors and their approved Related Technical Instruction providers on the state’s eligible training provider list[1]. This policy provides eligibility criteria and procedures for implementing the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) requirements for the inclusion of Registered Apprenticeship programs in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. This policy is applicable to sponsors of Registered Apprenticeship training services for adults, dislocated workers and other populations as

defined by WIOA, Title I-B. To be included on the states Eligible Training Provider and Program List (ETPL), Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors must initiate interest and submit their Registered Apprenticeship information to the Local Workforce Development Boards. Having Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors on the State's ETPL will increase opportunities for Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the Commonwealth. The Headquarters office for the Division of Registered Apprenticeship will oversee the addition of RA sponsors to the ETPL by managing initial communication regarding the opportunity to have the program placed on the list and by sharing the approved programs with the LWDB or statewide ETPL administrator.

Increased Funding Resources:

Virginia has a stated goal to expand the usage of Registered Apprenticeship as an employment training model in industries that have not traditionally relied on this method of achieving competent employees in their particular occupations. Virginia has sought and will continue to seek funding opportunities and develop strategies to meet this goal.

One such opportunity is the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant to support a coordinated, national investment strategy that aims to strengthen and modernize the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) system. The SAEF grant program intends to better support State capacity and planning to create new RAPs while also driving system innovation and reform. The SAEF funding opportunity is part of a five-year investment plan through the U.S. DOL.

The U.S. DOL awarded the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) a SAEF grant to expand the Virginia Registered Apprenticeship program by creating opportunities for innovation, engagement, and accessibility in Virginia. The DOLI was awarded \$927,372 to carry out grant activities for their SAEF (HIRED - Highlight, Include, Recruit, Engage, Deliver) grant project with a focus on expanding usage of the apprenticeship model in clean energy, early childhood education, and teacher education. The SAEF (HIRED) grant program will expand Registered Apprenticeship Program opportunities for all Virginia residents with an emphasis on serving veterans, individuals with disabilities, justice-impacted, low-income, and other marginalized populations.

Another opportunity is the Returning Citizen Registered Apprenticeship Initiative (RCRAI). This committee is run by the Division Director and includes Virginia Works staff, VADOC staff, Employer/Sponsors, support entities, and other interested parties. With collaboration and small group input, a drop-box email for RA vacancies is now available for Virginia employers, to include RA sponsors, who can discreetly advertise within this population of individuals soon to be released from incarceration.

[1]Registered Apprenticeship Programs Policy 404-02, Change 1, 2021
<https://virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-404-02-Registered-Apprenticeship-Programs-Change-1-1.pdf>

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including registered apprenticeship programs (WIOA section 122).

The Commonwealth of Virginia maintains procedures for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs through several policy and guidance documents located on the Virginia Career Works website's practitioner's page[1].

More specifically, the VBWD has issued Policy No. 404-01 Change 1 Identification of Eligible Training Providers and Policy No. 404-02 Change 1 Registered Apprenticeship Programs; and the Title I Administrator has issued the guidance documents Virginia Workforce Letter (VWL) No. 16-06, Change 1: Eligible Training Provider and Programs List under the WIOA of 2014 and Virginia Workforce Letter (VWL) No. 15-01, Change 2.

VBWD Policy No. 404-01 Change 1 provides eligibility criteria for providers of training, information, and procedures for implementing the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) requirements in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. This policy is applicable to providers of occupational skills training services for adults, dislocated workers, and other populations as defined by WIOA Title I-B. VWL No. 16-06 Change 1 provides the procedures and guidelines for determining training provider eligibility effective July 1, 2017. This policy applies to training programs provided by the Eligible Training Provider and Individual Training Account Services supported by WIOA Title I funds. Registered Apprenticeship programs are also addressed in these and other policy documents.

Initial Program Eligibility:

Per VBWD Policy No. 404-01 Change 1, the LWDBs currently have the responsibility for receiving, reviewing, and approving training providers and their programs. They must also ensure that data elements related to initial application, continued eligibility and performance information regarding approved providers and programs are entered into the supported state system.

The state's WIOA Title I Administrator is required to maintain the infrastructure to support the state ETPL, including publishing provided information related to cost and performance outcomes, and make it publicly accessible in a user-friendly way to the consumers, other members of the public, and other workforce stakeholders.

Approval by a LWDB places the provider and program on the state ETPL but does not guarantee a local area will fund the approved training activity through the issuance of an ITA. That determination is further based on local policy which must include, at minimum, relevance of training to demand occupations that are in demand regionally, availability of local funds, and likelihood that training will support the individual in meeting their career objectives and employment.

There are five categories of providers who may apply for consideration to be included on the state eligible training provider list:

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1. A postsecondary educational institution that is eligible to receive federal funds under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that provides a program that leads to certification or license or college certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree.
 2. A postsecondary school that offers formal instructional programs with curricula designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or its equivalent. Such schools include programs of academic-vocational, vocational, and continuing professional education that may lead to a certification or licensure. This category excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.
 3. An entity that carries out related instruction under the National Apprenticeship Act that is recognized by Virginia Works,
 4. A provider of a program of occupational training services that under Section 23-276.2 of the Code of Virginia is exempt from certification as a postsecondary school such as a professional or occupational training program regulated by another state or federal governmental agency other than the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), any school, institute, or course of instruction offered by any trade association or any nonprofit affiliation of a trade association on subjects related to the trade, business, or profession represented by such association, or
 5. A provider of adult education and literacy activities under title II of WIOA, if these activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training.

Programs and providers under category 3 will be granted approval, if requested, following confirmation by Virginia Works that the sponsoring employer and apprenticeship related instruction have been recognized by the state and are active and in good standing. VBWD Policy No. 404-02, Change 1 describes the eligibility criteria and procedures specific to Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Continued Program Eligibility:

Per VBWD Policy No. 404-01 Change 1, after one full year of eligibility, approved Eligible Training Providers will be required annually to provide basic information for continued eligibility and will submit performance information for all students, including participants whose activities were funded through an ITA.

Local Workforce Development Boards that initially accepted application and approved that provider/program will request renewal verification and program performance reporting for providers/programs using a standard statewide template and procedure. This process will transition to Virginia Works to process ETPL renewals in concert with the LWDBs during the 2024-2025 program years in accordance with VBWD Policy No. 404-01 Change 1.

That provided data must be entered by the approving LWDB or Virginia Works into the state reporting system to ensure transparency and support informed customer choice in the evaluation and selection of training providers. Providers of training who fail to provide the verification and performance information within 90 days of request will be removed from the state eligible training provider list.

A recognized Registered Apprenticeship program may remain on the ETPL as long as it remains registered and recognized by Virginia Works. Annually, the administrator of Title I funds will provide the RA team a list of approved providers in this category and verify the status of apprenticeship program.

Registered Apprenticeship Program:

VBWD Policy No. 404-02, Change 1 Registered Apprenticeship Programs provides the process for adding Registered Apprenticeship programs to the state eligible training provider list. The Registered Apprenticeship process and supporting documents reflect the automatic eligibility of all approved Registered Apprenticeship programs to be included in the State Eligible Training Provider list.

Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors will be invited by Virginia Works to be included on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Virginia Works determines RA Sponsors Program eligibility. If Virginia Works recognizes the program and reports it in good standing, it is automatically included on the list and will remain as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list.

RA Sponsors who are interested in being on the ETPL shall provide the following information to the Virginia Works:

1. Occupations included within the Registered Apprenticeship program
2. Name and address of the Registered Apprenticeship Employer/Sponsor
3. Name and address of the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider, and the location if different than the program sponsor's address
4. The method and duration of RTI
5. The cost of the RTI if the RA sponsor is not providing the instruction
6. The number of active apprentices in the program

Following the receipt of a completed application, Virginia Works will verify that the program sponsor is active and in good standing. Following that confirmation, the Registered Apprenticeship form (Attachment A) from VBWD Policy 404-02, Change 1 will be forwarded to the WIOA Title I Administrator to add the RA program information to the state ETPL. RA programs will remain on the list as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list.

Per VBWD Policy No. 404-02, Change 1, continued eligibility for Registered Apprenticeships is automatic unless the sponsor of the program no longer wants to be included on the list or the sponsored program is deregistered with Virginia Works. Annually, the WIOA Title I program administrator will provide a list of the approved Registered Apprenticeship ETPs to the RA team for verification of current registration status. Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the state performance requirements.

References:

VWL No. 16-06 Change 1 Eligible Training Provider and Program List under WIOA:
www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-06-Change-1-ETPL-7-13-2017Final.pdf

VBWD Policy No. 404-01 Change 1 Identification of Eligible Training Providers:
www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-404-01-Change-1-ETPL-Policy-Approved.pdf

VBWD Policy No. 404-02, Change 1: Registered Apprenticeship Programs:
www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-404-02-Registered-Apprenticeship-Programs-Change-1-1.pdf

[1]Virginia Career Works

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOR THE ADULT PRIORITY OF SERVICE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E) THAT REQUIRES AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF, WHEN USING WIOA ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES, TO GIVE PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS).

Virginia is approaching the Priority of Service for individual Career and Training Services using the following conditions for Priority of Service:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses have priority of service for WIOA and other designated job training programs funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor
2. Individualized career and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to: a) Public Assistance Recipients; or b) Other Low-Income Individuals; or c) Individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient
3. Applies to the WIOA Title I Adult programs

Priority is given in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are public assistance recipients, or other low-income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient
2. Non-covered persons (who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are in the priority groups for Title I WIOA Title I Adult funds
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA's priority groups
4. Priority populations established by the Governor/ or Local Workforce Development Boards
5. Non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA

The Title I Monitoring Group will review locally developed Priority of Service policies and the implementation of the local policies as part of the annual reviews of local workforce development areas. Virginia's WIOA Title I Administration Team will continue to develop

additional program guidance on Priority of Service and to provide training to local workforce development areas and their service providers on a regular basis.

Reference:

VWL 18-04, Change 3 Priority of Service: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-18-04-Change-3-Priority-of-Service.pdf

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

Virginia has issued guidance, VWL 16-02 Change 1 Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures. This administrative guidance describes the procedure for initiating a request to transfer funds, up to 100%, between the adult and dislocated worker streams under a particular allocation cycle by Local Workforce Development Boards.

For purposes of the WIOA, LWDBs must submit on letterhead a written or electronic request to transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker streams to the WIOA Title I Administrator for administrative review and approval on behalf of the Governor. The WIOA Title I Administrator will communicate its determination on the request within 15 business days of receipt of the request.

Transfer requests must include:

1. WIOA program year affected
2. Amount of the proposed transfer
3. A detailed impact analysis indicating the anticipated impact to the program from which funds are being moved and to the program which will receive the funds
4. Documentation that the transfer decision was approved at a meeting of the Local Workforce Development Board
5. Transfer requests must be submitted before expenses are incurred

The impact analysis shall include:

1. Expenditures for the adult and dislocated worker programs for each of the last three years
2. The number of adult and dislocated worker participants enrolled in each program for each of the last three years
3. A narrative describing how the receiving program participants will benefit from the transfer as well as how the impact on the contributing program will be mitigated, including assurance that the remaining participants will be served

To make a determination, the WIOA Title I Administration staff will also review the LWDB's most recent Monthly Expenditure Detail Report (MEDR) for the program year to confirm that sufficient unobligated funds in the source Program funding stream are available to fund the requested transfer.

Approved transfers will result in the requesting LWDB receiving a signed Transfer Authorization from the Virginia's WIOA Title I Administrator. The Authorization does not result in an actual change in the allocation by stream in the original Notice of Obligation. Authorization of transfers and transfer-funded expenditures to date shall be reported by the LWDB on subsequent MEDR for the applicable program year.

Reference:

VWL 16-02 Change 1 Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures:

www.viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-02-change-1-Local-Area-WIOA-Funds-Transfer-Procedures-Final.pdf

6. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(I).

VBWD policy mandates WIOA Title I- Trade Co-Enrollment 19-01.

The statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements to co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants in the WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) Program are clear:

- Sec. 125. DECLARATION OF POLICY; SENSE OF CONGRESS. (Trade Reform Act of 2002) (a) DECLARATION OF POLICY. — Congress reiterates that, under the TAA program under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, workers are eligible for transportation, childcare, and healthcare assistance, as well as other related assistance under programs administered by the Department of Labor.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA) 2015, Sec. 239 (f):

Agreements entered under this section shall provide for the coordination of the administration of the provisions for employment services, training, and supplemental assistance under sections 235 and 236 of this Act. Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act upon such terms and conditions established by the Secretary in consultation with the States and set forth in such agreement. Any agency of the State jointly administering such provisions under such agreement is a cooperating State agency for purposes of this chapter.

- Governor-Secretary Agreement:

The Department concludes that no additional regulatory language needed in the WIOA rules for compliance with this new requirement, since [adversely affected workers] AAWs are eligible for enrollment in the WIOA dislocated worker program upon request. The States, under the Governor-Secretary Agreement, are bound to the implementation of these rules. The Governor-Secretary Agreement binds the entire executive branch of the State government to the terms and conditions of the Agreement and the implementation of the TAA Program. (TAA Final Rule Preamble)

- TAA Final Rule 20 CFR 618.325(a)(1): September 21, 2020

A State must co-enroll trade-affected workers who are eligible for WIOA's dislocated worker program. Workers may choose to decline co-enrollment in WIOA. A State cannot deny such a worker benefits or services under the TAA Program solely for declining co-enrollment in WIOA.

Co-enrollment Mandated percentage per quarter:

1. Current USDOL established goal is 75 percent co-enrollment measure for PIRL reporting.
2. Increasing up to 100 percent co-enrollment measure for PIRL reporting over time as directed by USDOL for compliance with co-enrollment mandate.
 - a) States must develop and manage resources (including electronic case management systems) to integrate data, including co-enrollment data, provided through different agencies administering benefits and services to trade-affected workers in order to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity, as well as reliable fiscal and performance reporting. [WIOA section 103(b)(3)].
 - b) Exclusion to the co-enrollment requirement would be those TAW's not registered with Selective Services and those wishing not to take advantage of WIOA Dislocated Workers Program. If the TAW's wish is not to participate in the WIOA Dislocated Workers Program then the TAW will sign a statement of his or her wish with full understanding that their wish will not eliminate any benefits under the TAA program.

7. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(C)

The goal of TAA is to return the TAW to suitable employment as quickly as possible in the shortest time. The definition of "suitable employment" is work substantially equal to or at a higher skill level than the worker's past adversely affected employment, and wages for such worker are not less than 80 percent of worker's previous average weekly wage.

The services provided under the TAA program are:

1. Employment and Case Management
2. Training if there is no suitable employment
3. Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)
4. Job Search Allowances
5. Relocation Allowances
6. Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)
7. Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)

8. Referrals to partner agencies as appropriate

Either before or after the informational sessions, a Trade Case Manager will schedule a TAW immediately for an initial assessment. The Trade Case Manager initial assessment includes but is not limited to:

1. TAW registration review in the Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC)
2. Creation of the TAA application and enrollment in the Trade Program
3. Employment History Review/documentation of current skill sets matched against current Labor Market Information/Resume Prep
4. Review of the transferability of the current skill sets to the current labor market
5. Review of educational background/levels
6. Development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
7. Trade Case Managers start initial job search efforts with the TAW along with a referral to the Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff. The WP staff will provide TAA case management to help the customer prepare for and obtain suitable reemployment as quickly as possible with the assistance of other appropriate programs, as necessary.
8. If the TAW has significant barriers to employment, TAA Case Managers will make referrals to the Department of Education, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services and other partner agencies for appropriate services to ensure a positive outcome.
9. The initial assessment with the TAW includes detailed information concerning the benefits of enrollment with the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program. The TAW is notified of the requirement of co-enrollment and notified of the benefits offered under WIOA Dislocated Worker Program, a referral form is completed and issued to the WIOA Title I partner for the referral to WIOA Dislocated Workers Program LWDB Executive Directors. The Executive Directors take the lead to ensure all WIOA operator/s within their service review for enrollment into the Dislocated Worker Program.

After the referral from TAA Case Managers to the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program has occurred:

- a. If it is determined, during the TAA Case Managers initial assessment that the need exists for upgrading of skills for the TAW to meet his/her goal then a request will be made of our WIOA Dislocated Work partner. The request will require a more Comprehensive Assessment for documenting the rationale for TAA to provide training services to the TAW.
- b. The Comprehensive Assessment will consist of a Career-Scope/TABE and other approved comprehensive assessment tools.

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- c. The WIOA Case Manager will incorporate the TAA Case Managers Initial Assessment findings along with the six criteria under the TAA legislations conditions for approval 617.22 in order to issue a recommendation to TAA for consideration of training.
 - d. The TAA caseworker reviews the WIOA recommendation, the comprehensive assessments and documentation in-person or by video meeting with the TAW to ensure the recommendation that TAA and WIOA have agreed upon will meet the TAW's reemployment goals.
 - e. WIOA Dislocated Worker Program, Trade Program and TAW must agree upon the recommendation if not then all must revisit findings before proceeding.
 - f. The TAA Case Manager will generate the necessary training documents, securing the needed contracts with the training provider with all cost of the training (tuition, books, supplies, mileage, testing fees) covered by the TAA Program.
 - g. The WIOA partner as needed for the TAW to be successful in the recommended training covers supportive Services i.e. childcare, mileage if not covered by Trade, vehicle repairs. (All supportive services must be defined in the local WIOA Dislocated Worker program as to what is and is not covered while in approved training.)
 - h. Trade Case Managers will oversee the training under TAA with weekly, bi-weekly updates or at a minimum of 30-day updates to the WIOA Case Management to ensure compliance for both programs. Established update periods (weekly, bi-weekly or every 30 days) between the two case managers will be discussed/implemented/adhered to for a seamless delivery of services to the TAW and compliance of each program.
 - i. All documents received from the TAW, Training Provider etc. will be uploaded upon receipt into the document management system for access by the WIOA partner to ensure compliance for both programs.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(J), 20 CFR 618.305

Insert response to prompt B.8. here.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA. FURTHER, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL AREAS IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES OR TO PROVIDE SOME OR ALL OF THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS DIRECTLY.

Virginia requires that LWDBs adhere to the state and federal procurement guidelines in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities. Virginia provides technical assistance to the LWDBs regarding the criteria to be used in their RFPs. The criteria used to assess the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures is based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA. In addition to continuous improvement in service delivery, the quality of services provided, improvements in case management, and resource allocation, Local Areas should also take into consideration:

1. If the training program is related to an in-demand occupation, or career pathways identified in the state and local plans; and
2. If the training program results in a recognized credential.

Virginia provides technical assistance to the local boards that includes the following information:

The WIOA Section 681.400 states that while the grant recipient may directly provide youth services, any services awarded through grants or contracts must be awarded through a competitive process:

The grant recipient/fiscal agent has the option to provide directly some or all of the youth workforce investment activities.

However, as provided in WIOA sec. 123, if a Local WDB chooses to award grants or contracts to youth service providers to carry out some or all of the youth workforce investment activities, the Local WDB must award such grants or contracts on a competitive basis, subject to the exception explained below at paragraph (b)(4) of this section:

(1) The Local WDB must identify youth service providers based on criteria established in the State Plan (including such quality criteria established by the Governor for a training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential) and take into consideration the ability of the provider to meet performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators of performance for youth programs.

(2) The Local WDB must procure the youth service providers in accordance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900, in addition to applicable State and local procurement laws.

(3) If the Local WDB establishes a standing youth committee under 20 CFR 681.100 it may assign the committee the function of selecting grants or contracts. If local WDBs directly provide youth services and a single entity performs multiple roles (such as fiscal agent, service provider, or one-stop operator) a written agreement between that local WDB and chief elected official is required. The agreement must clarify:

- How they will comply with WIOA and corresponding regulations, relevant OMB circulars, and the State's conflict of interest policy.
- Expectations on distinct roles and clear methods of tracking execution and accountability for the distinct roles (TEGL 21-16).

The following criteria shall be incorporated into the evaluation of youth service programs during procurement:

1. The program will have a record of demonstrated effectiveness.
2. The program will not discriminate in any way and will be in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. The provider must have the capacity to identify issues that are hindering youth from succeeding in the program and recommend the appropriate support services.
4. The provider must be able to detail how linkages between community, academic, occupational learning, and work experience will be used to enhance the youth development and employability. They should also demonstrate the involvement of the business/employer community.
5. The program will maintain a close working relationship with the local One-Stop Career Center.
6. Programs with certifications or licenses as a goal will make arrangements for participants to test for and obtain the certification or license.
7. Any program offering summer employment opportunities must be linked to academic and occupational learning as a complement to overall year-round program goals. Summer employment opportunities operated as a stand-alone Summer Youth Program are specifically prohibited.
8. The provider must establish specific timeframes for evaluation of participant performance, attendance and progress, including level of academic performance, vocational abilities/skills, aptitudes, and interests.
9. The provider must identify process and strategies to be used to ensure that participants receive planned services and reach planned goals and what corrective actions will be available for participants who are not meeting the requirement of each activity or goals. The provider must detail the internal systems that will be used to report and monitor programmatic and fiscal activities.

10. The provider must permit federal, state, and local area staff and designated agents to conduct regular monitoring activities, including communication with customers and contractor staff at instructional sites

State monitoring and program reviews, along with evaluations will be used to assess the Commonwealth's criteria compliance and approach to local RFP development.

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING EQUITABLE RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE PROMISING PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THOSE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD), established the Access and Equity Committee to help address youth and young adult workforce development issues. One of the priorities of this group is providing strategic direction to align core programs and leverage resources among core partners (such as the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, Department of Social Services and Department of Juvenile Justice) for Out of School Youth (OSY). In addition, the VBWD Access and Equity Committee is developing strategies that can be implemented at the state and local level focusing on identifying OSY, enrolling OSY in program services and improving overall outcomes for OSY. For example, Virginia will identify outreach and engagement strategies for opportunity youth, also known as disconnected youth and young adults that will result in recommendations around co-enrollment, partnerships, career pathways/sector strategies, retention, and performance measures.

In addition to the Access and Equity Committee, Virginia recommended that the local WDBs develop and adopt strategies to effectively serve their youth population. These strategies are to include recruitment, outreach, and engagement of youth such as developing youth specific career centers that provide programming and services throughout the community with a primary goal of connecting the disconnected OSY youth population to WIOA Title I Youth program opportunities. The State's recommendation is that the local workforce development board will take into consideration having a youth standing committee whose activities may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Provide information and assisting with planning, operational oversight, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth
2. Recommend policy direction to the local board for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth
3. Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system
4. Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth
5. Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers

6. Provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs

The electronic document imaging and storage system, a feature in Virginia's system of record (VaWC), will allow staff or local areas to facilitate the upload of supporting documentation and local areas to transition to paperless record keeping. This new feature also allows the LWDBs to broaden their outreach and recruitment efforts and provides the capability to conduct and complete youth eligibility remotely and further provide access to the OSY population that traditionally would not come into the Virginia Career Works Center. An analysis of Current WIOA youth enrollment demographics shows the Hispanic youth population is the lowest served youth population throughout the state. Per the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) drop-out rate data and WIOA youth enrollment information, data analysis indicates that the Hispanic youth population and students with disabilities is an area of opportunity for the WIOA Title I Youth program to recruit and provide more direct services. Virginia will work with the LWDBs to further explore this area of opportunity in regards to serving more disconnected youth populations.

Virginia has developed and implemented two statewide youth and young adult project grants, which engage and inspire high school students to pursue education, training, and careers in in-demand skilled trades. The intent of the project grants is to educate parents, students and guidance counselors on the benefits of skilled trades and to increase youth exposure to opportunities of workforce development programs, such as registered apprenticeships and in-demand occupations. These statewide projects should enable youth (in-school and/out-of-school youth, 14 to 24 years of age) with barriers to employment to visit local in-demand trades, employment opportunities that are available in their local communities. The traditional strategies and services models used for the adult and dislocated worker population are not the solutions that will meet the needs of the out-of-school youth population. Therefore, the use of different assessment tools to improve the service decision process will assist local service providers in selecting the best path for the youth to follow. Customer engagement with a human centered design is critical to success in attaining outcomes. Making the services and the delivery of those services relevant to the individual customer will enhance the overall success of the programs in attaining the WIOA performance outcomes, especially for OSY.

This means working closely with state and local youth organizations that serve runaways and homeless youth, pregnant and parenting youth, subjects of the adult or juvenile justice system, including the Virginia Department of Corrections, juvenile justice and juvenile probation, foster care partners, and organizations that provide services to youth with disabilities. Through these collaborative partnerships, the Commonwealth will be able to focus on serving youth most in need, and services provided will improve opportunities for these disconnected youth and young adults. These actions will increase referrals to and from the YouthBuild, JobCorps program, and Adult Education programs.

Utilizing and providing state level support for the fourteen WIOA Title I Youth program elements will provide a structure for youth programs to support customers in the attainment of their individual goals as well as WIOA program outcomes. During the assessment process,

case managers will develop an individual services plan (ISS) for the customer's needs, based on the assessment and eligibility processes, as well as how does the individual service plan support the attainment of the youth specific performance outcomes.

A structured and technical assistance process, where programs, performance, and reporting in information system supports will be provided on an ongoing basis by the State. There will be a training process to engage providers and State staff to reinforce program goals and outcomes; and to encourage State and local collaboration to improve services and the associated program outcomes.

The State will continue to provide yearly Youth program monitoring as well as develop guidance and policy that enhances youth service delivery and does not restrict local innovation, while still maintaining program integrity.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR DELIVERING YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE WAYS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS CAN MAKE AVAILABLE THE 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2); AND EXPLAIN HOW LOCAL AREAS CAN ENSURE WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, IS PRIORITIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT WITHIN A BROADER CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY.

The following 14 program elements must be provided by each Local area or made available through local area community partner organizations:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities
4. Occupational skills training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster

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6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
 7. Supportive services
 8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
 9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate
 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
 11. Financial literacy education
 12. Entrepreneurial skills training
 13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
 14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

The availability and delivery of the above Youth Program elements will be an integral part of the LWDA Local Plan, the Youth Request for Proposal (RFP) process and addressed in the Commonwealth's response to the establishment of RFP criteria stated in c.1 of this section. The LWDA Local Plan will state how these programs will be available and include an implementation plan. The foundation of the provision of services for youth should be a strong assessment process and referral system based on leveraged partnerships, both within and outside of the Virginia Career Works Centers. The change in emphasis to serving the out-of-school population requires a different approach than serving the in-school population. The assessment and service plan will reflect the needs of the individual customer and must be kept current to adjust to the changing needs of the individual customer. State and local monitoring will review the provision of the services to youth and how these services are delivered within a local area. Evaluations of program effectiveness will include a review of the provision of the youth services.

Virginia has provided regional training to local boards regarding youth eligibility, types of work experiences, the alignment of work experiences with individual service strategy goals, work experience regulations and compliance. Virginia will continue to provide training on work experiences, particularly in the area of pre-apprenticeships. Virginia Works currently partners with 34 school divisions to establish Youth Registered Apprenticeships (YRA) that integrate CTE curriculum with real job experiences. The agency will ensure that WIOA Title I team works strategically with the Registered Apprenticeship team to support YRAs and pre-apprenticeship programs across the state.

WIOA Title I collaborates with LWDBs to facilitate peer to peer webinars showcasing their local area youth program design and shared individual best practices including pre-apprenticeship under the work experience program element. The webinars address understanding 20 CFR § 681.480 - What is a pre-apprenticeship program and pre-apprenticeship training designed to prepare youth to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program. Additionally, the State will continue to provide yearly regional training and program monitoring to ensure the local area understands the components of a registered apprenticeship program that includes the following elements:

1. Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region involved
2. Access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly
3. Hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, and understanding how the skills acquired through coursework can be applied toward a future career
4. Opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential
5. A partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs that assists in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship program in a registered apprenticeship program

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

State policy was revised to provide language for youth requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment (VWL 16-11, Youth in Need of Additional Assistance Requirements and In School Youth 5% Limitation Barrier). VWL 16-11 requires each LWDA to define the eligibility criterion “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” in the LWDA’s local plan and in local policies. Flexibility for LWDA is required to ensure that program delivery is adapted to local needs addressing an individual who is:

1. Enrolled in an eligible education program, but also requires additional assistance beyond that offered by the service provider to complete the activity or program
2. An eligible youth who is near the point of being ready for a job or employment, but requires additional assistance to acquire or retain a job

The additional requirements will be specified by the program operator to avoid failure in the program, a prospective employer to avoid failure in obtaining a specific job, or present employer to prevent an employed youth from losing employment. These additional requirements would need to be documented in the Youth Service Plan.

State guidance for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth is primarily located in the following VWLs:

1. VWL 15-02, Change 2, Attachment C, WIOA Youth eligibility: virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-15-02-Attachment-C-WIOA-Youth-Eligibility-Change-2.pdf
2. VWL 16-11 Youth in Need of Additional Assistance Requirements and In School Youth 5 Percent Limitation Barrier: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-11-Youth-in-Need-of-Additional-Assistance-5-Limitation-Barrier.pdf

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In states where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the state and local chief elected official. In such cases, the state must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

This is not applicable for Virginia.

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

This is not applicable for Virginia.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

This is not applicable for Virginia.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

This is not applicable for Virginia.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

This is not applicable for Virginia.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

This is not applicable for Virginia.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

This is not applicable for Virginia.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

This is not applicable for Virginia.

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-b operational plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:

- A. Supporting employer engagement;*
- B. Connecting education and training strategies;*
- C. Supporting work-based learning;*
- D. Improving job and career results, and*
- E. Other guidance issued by the department.*

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:

- A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;*
- B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;*
- C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;*
- D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.*
- E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.*

7. THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE REGARDING THE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OBSERVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING WAIVER, IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

N/A - Virginia does not have any waiver requests.

Title I-B Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	No
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

Since the adoption of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in 2016, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) have been implementing training and technical assistance and institutionalizing the use of standards-based instruction (SBI) through practices and grant requirements. Virginia is now in what Susan Pimentel, in the *Handbook for Sustaining Standards-based Instruction in Adult Education* (2014), describes as Stage Four implementation, “Initiating a Scale-Up Plan:

Sustaining Momentum, Progress, and Creative Renewal.” The VDOE competitive grants require that programs demonstrate full implementation of SBI; program monitoring ensures that programs self-assess and document this implementation. The SBI webpage (valrc.org/standards-based-instruction) of the VALRC website provides key links, resources, and technical assistance. The VDOE and VALRC have collaborated to create versions of the CCR Observation Tools to support providers to observe classrooms for standards alignment in online and hybrid instruction.

The VALRC provides a variety of training options to support new and experienced educators in effective SBI, from foundational training introducing the CCRS and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) to subject-area-specific training that fully integrates standards. Standards-aligned professional development offerings include Professional Learning Communities on evidence-based reading instruction; monthly math instructor support group; and a six-week online course on using the ELPS. A webinar series on integrating the CCRS English language arts/literacy key shifts into instruction, adapting strategies and activities from the Standards-in-Action 2.0 trainings, was developed to offer short duration, informal training on *Purposeful Reading for English Language Learners*. Virginia will also continue to support dissemination and use of the standards-aligned *Teaching the Skills that Matter* skills, lessons, and approaches.

In 2020, the VDOE commissioned a suite of nine (three mathematics, three English language arts, and three English for speakers of other languages) CCRS- and ELPS-aligned online courses intended to support the expansion of remote synchronous and asynchronous instruction. By managing a master suite of exportable Canvas courses, Virginia aims to minimize the duplication of effort by regional adult education programs and instructors and create a high-quality set of courses for adult education and literacy instruction that is aligned to rigorous standards and best practices and designed to be customizable by instructors. Development work was conducted by Virtual Virginia throughout PY2021-2022. Ongoing technical assistance from Virtual Virginia and the VALRC will be provided to support wide use and customization of these courses.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

The AEFLA Section 231 program is a separate competition that runs on a shared timeline and follows the same processes for application announcement, submission, screening for demonstrated effectiveness, review, and selection using the criteria as found in Section 231(e) of WIOA. The announcement and promotion of the opportunity to apply for Section 231 funds is made in conjunction with the other AEFLA competitions.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) competed for these funds in the spring of 2023 for the 2023-2025 grant cycle. The next multi-year competition will be held in the spring of 2026 and will follow the same or equivalent steps and processes.

Applications for Section 231 funds must pass the demonstrated effectiveness screening tool that is required of all applicants for AEFLA funds. Applicants must provide data for all content areas in which they have student data as well as the post-exit indicators. Applicants must respond to all considerations specified in Section 231(e) and applicants' responses are evaluated by a panel of external and VDOE reviewers as well as by representatives of their local workforce development board(s).

The VDOE awarded grants in 2023 for a three-year cycle. The next competition will take place in the spring of 2026. In advance of the 2023 competition, the VDOE reviewed the 2020 U.S. Census and American Community Survey data to set new enrollment targets and funding allocations for applicants.

As part of the application, the VDOE requires applicants to use updated demographic, skills, and labor market information (LMI) data to describe the need for service and the unique challenges or strengths of the geographic area and population. Applicants also describe

proposed data collection and fiscal management procedures and respond to the 13 considerations outlined in Sec. 231(e).

Eligible applicants for the Section 231 funds and state matching funds must submit applications to serve as fiscal agents for regional programs, to provide instruction at all six adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) educational functioning levels (EFLs) plus English language acquisition (ELA) activities where there is a demonstrated need. Each provider has been required for the past three years to offer at least one integrated education and training (IET), and most providers offer multiple cohorts to respond to student interest, ability, and employer need. The regional structure ensures full geographic coverage of the Commonwealth and efficiency with program management. Seven regions included family literacy in their applications for PY2023-2024 and will be supported in their effort to offer high-quality programming that meets the four-component model through the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) and a contract with the National Center for Families Learning.

Approximately 60 percent of the students served are in ELA or IELCE classes, and ASE is a smaller percentage of the remaining enrollment than ABE. The immigrant populations in Virginia are concentrated in the urban areas as well as in the agricultural regions of the state, including the Shenandoah Valley and Eastern Shore areas. Providers are preparing to serve more English language learners as the overall number of new refugees and immigrants is projected to increase.

The competitive cycle provides an opportunity for the VDOE to publish state priorities and requirements. For example, since the 2020 cycle, one of the requirements was that all providers offer at least one IET cohort each year that is aligned to the local workforce development board LMI and strategic plan. This has assisted Virginia to meet the goal that IETs are available widely across the Commonwealth, in fact, even through the pandemic-related closures, Virginia was able to consistently serve approximately ten percent of students in IETs.

State priorities for title II providers for program years 2024-2026 are as follows:

- **Improving service and instruction for individuals with disabilities.** All provider staff members should be aware of how to greet and serve all individuals from “welcome.” This includes accessible websites; front desk interactions; test accommodations upon disclosure of a disability; reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, and universal design practices for instruction and participation; and information referrals for services from other agencies and accommodation requests.
- **Incorporating the science of reading into instruction, including research-based practices on adult English language learning.** Professional development and ongoing staff support to incorporate the science of reading should be evident for instructors in all content areas. Providers should also have evidence of consideration of this research during curriculum reviews, formative assessment selections, and

purchasing decisions. Programs are encouraged to consider how literacy instruction is taught throughout the curriculum, including in occupational training instruction.

- **Implementing standards-based instruction, civics education, and workforce preparation activities in instruction at all levels for all students.** Providers must ensure that all instruction reflects the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and, as appropriate, the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). All students should be receiving workforce preparation activities, including in digital skills, and civics education to prepare students for work and civic participation.
- **Utilizing the functionality of the new data system for program improvement.** Providers must participate in intensive training and technical assistance during PY2024-2026 to ensure administrators, support staff, and instructors become fully aware of the functionality and features of the LACES data system to support student management, decision-making, local monitoring, and program improvement.
- **Enhancing the delivery of career pathway programming and supports.** All funded providers must offer at least one integrated education and training (IET) cohort per program year, preferably several to accommodate student interest and ability. IET cohorts must lead to a recognized postsecondary credential in an occupation that is in high demand in their region. Robust programming should support adult career coaching, supportive services, and be offered in alignment with other local stakeholders, including employers. Providers must report program data responsive to the efforts of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD).

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

Adult education and literacy activities;

Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;

Secondary school credit;

Integrated education and training;

Career pathways;

Concurrent enrollment;

Peer tutoring; and

Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The AEFLA Section 225 program is a separate competition that runs on the same timeline and follows the same processes as described for the other competitions for application announcement, submission, screening for demonstrated effectiveness, review, and selection using the criteria as found in Section 231(e) of WIOA. The announcement and promotion of the opportunity to apply for Section 225 funds is made in conjunction with the other AEFLA competitions. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) competed for

these funds in the spring of 2023 for the 2023-2025 grant cycle. The next multi-year competition will be held in the spring of 2026 and will follow the same or equivalent steps and processes.

Applications for Section 225 funds must pass the demonstrated effectiveness screening tool that is required of all applicants for AEFLA funds. C&I applicants must provide data for all content areas for which they have data as well as the post-exit indicators, although the employment and earnings measures will reflect the unique circumstances of the student population. Applicants must respond to all considerations specified in Section 231(e) and applicants' responses are evaluated by a panel of external and VDOE reviewers as well as by representatives of their local workforce development board(s).

The competition conducted in the spring of 2023 funds 22 regional providers to offer educational services in correctional facilities aligned to the list of allowable activities in WIOA Sec. 225. These services are offered in local and regional prisons and jails in addition to services being offered in a halfway house and in a state corrections facility. All providers must attest that they meet the requirement to give priority to serving individuals within five years of release.

The three-year awards establish the providers; the facilities where service is delivered may shift within the grant period to accommodate opportunities or respond to unforeseen limitations. As facilities re-open more fully following the pandemic restrictions and severe correctional staffing shortages, more programming is being offered and the VDOE is committed to increasing our enrollment to pre-pandemic levels or higher. Short-term integrated education and training (IET) cohorts are especially appealing in the corrections environment; these cohorts are designed to prepare inmates for work experiences within the facility or upon release and focus on occupations for which previous convictions do not present a barrier to employment.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

The AEFLA Section 243 IELCE program is a separate competition that runs on the same timeline and follows the same processes for application announcement, submission, screening for demonstrated effectiveness, review, and selection using the criteria as found in Section 231(e) of WIOA. The announcement and promotion of the opportunity to apply for Section 243 funds is made in conjunction with the other AEFLA competitions. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) competed for these funds in the spring of 2023 for the 2023-2025 grant cycle. The next multi-year competition will be held in the spring of 2026 and will follow the same or equivalent steps and processes.

Applications for Section 243 funds must pass the demonstrated effectiveness screening tool that is required of all applicants for AEFLA funds. IELCE applicants may provide data only for the English language acquisition content area as well as the post-exit indicators. Applicants must respond to all considerations specified in Section 231(e) and applicants' responses are evaluated by a panel of external and VDOE reviewers as well as by representatives of their local workforce development board(s) (LWDBs).

Applicants must respond to prompts about the population they plan to serve, including documenting the need for English language services in the area as well as describing how they will differentiate service and coordinate with local partners to accommodate learners with little formal education as well as professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

[Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243\(a\) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.](#)

Each Virginia adult education provider is required to offer integrated education and training (IET) programming that is responsive to the local labor market as described in the local Workforce Development Board plan as well as being responsive to the interests and abilities of the student population. Priorities for technical assistance in the 2023-2025 grant cycle include a focus on data-informed analysis and quality to ensure that those who enroll in an IET cohort are supported to complete the training, earn the credential, and gain employment.

In addition to the federal requirement that IELCE providers offer an IET, Virginia's state priorities for all providers in the 2024-2026 WIOA Combined State Plan cycle include service for individuals with disabilities; incorporation of the science of reading; implementation of standards-based instruction, civic education, and workforce preparation activities in instruction at all levels; utilization of the new state management information system; and offering at least one IET cohort per provider.

In PY2022-2023, 8 percent of students (343 total) enrolled in IELCE were enrolled in an IET cohort. Aligning occupational training to the language capabilities of English language learners remains a challenge for programs; some programs continue to create opportunities that scaffold the foundational skills necessary to be successful in occupational training. IET programs in PY2022-2023 were offered in the sectors of health care, customer service/retail,

hospitality, information technology, education, manufacturing, construction, transportation/warehousing, entrepreneurship, and administrative support. Plans for IELCE IETs in PY2023-2024 include health care, construction, manufacturing, education, accommodation/ food service, retail, administrative support, cosmetology, entrepreneurship, and information technology. Virginia promotes these opportunities locally through the programs, but also to our partners and stakeholders at the IETBlueprint.com website that displays planned IETs on a map and by industry sector.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

High-quality instruction in the content areas is always a focus of the professional development and technical assistance furnished to providers by the VDOE. In the 2023-2025 grant cycle, the state priorities listed above include the science of reading; this instruction will be contextualized to adult language learning principles to ensure that IELCE instructors are supporting rigorous language and literacy learning in all four areas of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The approval of new assessments by the U.S. Department of Education that are aligned with the more rigorous English Language Proficiency Standards and National Reporting System level descriptors will reinforce the critical importance of rigorous instruction in English language acquisition classes. The VDOE and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) will support practitioners to understand the newly approved assessments, align program curriculum to the standards and level descriptors, and provide models and networking opportunities for practitioners in the new grant cycle.

Another one of the priorities from the VALRC's professional development offerings for the 2023-2025 grant cycle is an intentional teaching of civics education and participation for all adult students. Virginia participated in the first cohort of the U.S. Department of Education's *Teaching Skills that Matter* (TSTM) project and will be using the civics component of the TSTM toolkit for this learning opportunity. This will be the topic of special importance for the IELCE providers who are required to instruct students on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

The IELCE providers work closely with their LWDB strategic partners to ensure that workforce preparation skills and integrated education and training (IETs) are offered and contextualized to the regional and local labor market demands. All providers disseminate recruitment announcements for local businesses, and IET classes often culminate in a job fair, reverse job fair, or mock interviews with local employers. As IELCE providers contribute to the statewide quarterly business services report, the state office notes an increasing level of activity among the IELCE providers with their local businesses. In addition, providers coordinate job placement services and career coaching for students through the local one-stop, whether on site or through virtual conferencing. As described more fully in the State

Leadership section E.1., providers are employing dedicated career coaches to work with adult education students, including IELCE students, to assist them to plan and transition to employment or further education and training.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

IELCE providers are integral partners in the one-stop system as more employers recognize the talent available in the English language learner population. IELCE providers coordinate with the LWDB strategic partners and other community partners, such as refugee resettlement agencies, to provide career and supportive services to immigrant students. During the 2023-2025 grant cycle, the VDOE is committed, with its partners, to continue to expand awareness of the title II program's capacity to connect businesses with the English language learner workforce.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) uses state leadership funds to provide, directly and through cooperative agreement with the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) at Virginia Commonwealth University, opportunities for professional development (PD) and technical assistance to adult education and literacy practitioners throughout the Commonwealth.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(a), alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners**, the VDOE uses state leadership funds to provide technical assistance, training, advising, and resources to eligible providers for offering career pathways and integrated education and training (IET) programming to ensure that adult learners have equitable opportunities to acquire digital literacy, employability, and academic skills, and are prepared for further postsecondary education or training, employment, and civic participation. The VALRC staff will continue to augment the VDOE state staff in statewide alignment initiatives such as the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways training initiative, the implementation of the Career Work Referral Portal, accessibility trainings and initiatives, public library initiatives, digital skill building initiatives, and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Pathways project.

An investment toward strengthening Virginia's response to this requirement has been to sponsor two cohorts of educators to become certified as adult career coaches. Forty practitioners have been sponsored to date and they will continue to be provided continuing education as coaches to assist the providers to develop more aligned career pathways with robust support services and referral mechanisms so that students are supported on their educational and employment journeys.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(b), the establishment or operation of high-quality professional development (PD) programs**, the vision of the VDOE is for the continuous improvement of instruction and performance in adult education and literacy and

support for practitioners in all roles to provide high-quality programming and instruction. The VDOE, through its cooperative agreement with the VALRC, supports both required and permissible state leadership activities as part of a high-quality PD program. PD is offered through a wide variety of delivery modes and levels of intensity from online courses, webinar series, office hour topical conversations, conference presentations, multi-month professional learning communities, and self-paced tutorials and resources. The VALRC makes use of the resources produced through national leadership activities sponsored by the U.S. departments of Education and Labor and offers Virginia practitioners opportunities to discuss how to implement the shared promising models into the Virginia context.

The VALRC collects and analyzes evaluation data from participants in their PD offerings, using the information to inform future topics, modes of delivery, degrees of intensity, clarify delivery, and evaluate the distribution of their efforts across the providers.

For the 2023-2025 grant cycle, the VALRC will offer practitioners PD to meet the state priorities of improving service to adults with disabilities and incorporating the science of reading into instruction for adults, as well as continued PD and technical assistance to meet the other priorities.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(c), the provision of technical assistance**, the VDOE provides technical assistance and guidance to eligible providers by providing direct customer service to providers with specific questions and or grant management needs. The VDOE promotes opportunities to all providers to share promising practices on high-quality, research-based instruction and programming; program accountability; and serving effectively as a one-stop partner. Technical assistance needs are solicited from program managers throughout the year and are informed by the results of the VDOE's monitoring and evaluation efforts, described below.

In the 2023-2025 grant cycle, the transition to a new data management and student information system, LACES by LiteracyPro (now Genius Student Information System), will necessitate a great deal of focus on data system training and technical assistance. LACES will be a partner with the VDOE and the VALRC on this effort, offering a wide range of self-paced and facilitated training options, full group in-person data trainings, and scheduled training and technical assistance delivered to each provider.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(d), monitoring and evaluation of quality, VDOE uses state leadership and administrative funds to support monitoring and evaluation activities**, which include not only evaluating the quality of and improvement in local adult education activities but also the effectiveness of efforts by the VALRC. The VALRC collects feedback and evaluation for all PD activities and analyzes this information twice a year and use the feedback to revise and adjust future trainings and resources. They consider the uptake of their offerings (number of participants) by topic and by provider to ensure that resources are being used across the Commonwealth.

The requirement to disseminate information about models and proven and/or promising adult education practices within the state is discussed as an integral component of the work that the VALRC completes in response to 223(a)(1)(b).

The VDOE's system for assessing the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities is based on five major components, which can occur both consecutively and concurrently throughout the program year: (1) a program self-assessment survey completed by each provider, (2) the distribution and review of an annual risk rubric for each program,

(3) ongoing data monitoring of information entered by each program in the state Management Information System (MIS) and the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) fiscal system throughout the program year, (4) technical assistance meetings, the content of which is based on 1-3 above, between the VDOE and each funded program, and (5) the identification of programs for monitoring visits, based on information collected in components 1-3 above. The VDOE's system for assessing the quality of providers is described in greater detail in section (f) Assessing Quality.

The transition to the LACES system in the 2023-2025 grant cycle will assist the VDOE to monitor programs more directly, add transparency to performance and risk reporting, and provide more data-informed and just-in-time technical assistance.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

Many of the activities described as responsive to state leadership requirements 223(1)(a) through (d) include elements of permissible state leadership activities as well. For example, a major investment of leadership funds under permissible activity (e) over the next five years is the procurement of the LACES data management and student information system and associated provider training. This system will provide the State and providers with an updated data management system and interface to improve performance through data-based decision making and daily data tracking. Significant levels of group and provider-specific training will be offered by the LACES team in cooperation with the VDOE. Additionally, the system will be instrumental in informing the State's technical assistance by providing data for the State's efforts to assess the quality of providers, discussed in section (f).

Other permissible activities that will be areas of focus during the cycle of this Plan include VALRC's work to support practitioners to offer high-quality online distance instruction and disseminate standards-based curricula 223(2)(b), (c) and (i). The VDOE expects that providers will continue to offer a variety of instructional modalities including in-person classes, hybrid/hyflex instruction, synchronous online courses, and asynchronous distance education options. Supporting instructors to offer high-quality instruction in all modes will continue to be the focus of the VALRC's PD and technical assistance.

Providing technical assistance on implementing integrated education and training programming and workplace adult literacy programming for career pathways and ensuring comprehension of and compliance with the new reporting requirements for types three, four, and five measurable skills gain also draws on the permissible activities of 223(2)(d) through (g).

The VALRC will also be the main provider of PD to assist providers in addressing the state priorities of implementing high-quality, science-based reading instruction for adults as well as instruction for individuals with disabilities, which are responsive to permissible activities 223(2)(c) and (k). Responsive to permissible activity 223(2)(b), Virginia will participate in the PY2023-2024 cohort of *Digital Resilience in the American Workforce* (DRAW), a U.S. Department of Education OCTAE technical assistance initiative. Through this work, the Virginia-based team will gain skills and resources and learn how to support colleagues to incorporate digital skill building into instruction. The implementation of this project will take place over several years.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) system for assessing the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities is based on five major components, which can occur both consecutively and concurrently throughout the program year: (1) a program self-assessment survey is completed by each provider, (2) the distribution and review of an annual risk rubric for each program, (3) ongoing data monitoring of information entered by each program in the state Management Information System (MIS) and the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) fiscal system throughout the program year, (4) technical assistance meetings, the content of which will be based on 1-3 above, between the VDOE and each funded program, and (5) the identification of programs for monitoring reviews, based on information collected in components 1-3 above.

Program Self-Assessment: This survey is completed by all providers annually and is designed to ensure that providers are compliant with the requirements of WIOA and the state priorities. The self-assessment aligns with the site-visit protocol, which reminds programs to maintain documentation and evidence of WIOA requirements and state priorities as well as gives programs an opportunity to note technical assistance needs that the VDOE and Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) can address.

Data and fiscal monitoring: Data and fiscal monitoring is ongoing throughout the grant cycle with quarterly reports used to monitor benchmarks. The VDOE will be transitioning to a new data system in PY2023-2024 and will employ many new reports and dashboard features with providers to monitor student performance. The fiscal management system used by the VDOE maintains a detailed record of transactions.

Risk Rubrics: The VDOE issues an annual risk rubric to providers comprising of the state workforce and federal WIOA accountability standards. The risk rubric and a rotation schedule are used to identify programs for a monitoring visit.

Technical Assistance Meetings: Virtual meetings are scheduled with programs annually after the self-assessment responses have been received and risk rubrics have been distributed. The conversations with program staff allow the VDOE to combine the quantitative analysis from the risk rubric with the more qualitative responses from the self-assessment to ascertain the specific technical assistance needs of each program.

On-Site, Targeted, and Virtual Monitoring Visits: The VDOE has a site-visit protocol that reflects the priorities identified in WIOA and in the combined state plan. The protocol is posted on the VDOE's website. On-site monitoring visits consist of VDOE staff, a peer reviewer from a similar program, and a VALRC staff member. The team travels to the identified site to conduct extensive document reviews, faculty and staff interviews, focus groups with teachers and students, class observations, and a data demonstration. Interviews

are also held with select workforce partner agency staff and the local Workforce Development Board director(s) to determine progress toward alignment of services among the local workforce agency partners. Reports and requests for corrective action plans, if needed, are drafted and shared with programs in a timely manner to facilitate continuous improvement. A targeted monitoring visit, both in-person or virtual, is conducted on an as-needed basis and can occur at any time throughout the year. Up to two components from the site-visit protocol are used for targeted monitoring visits. A targeted monitoring visit does not exempt the program from a full in-person site visit. Virtual monitoring uses a modified site-visit protocol and may be spread out longer than the on-site monitoring visit.

The purpose of VDOE's monitoring process is not only to ensure compliant programming and practices, but to learn of solutions to common challenges and promising models and practices that can be shared across the Commonwealth. The VDOE staff uses all monitoring activities to identify areas of success that can be shared via technical assistance, professional development, and communication channels through leadership activity Sec. 223(a)(1)(B), Dissemination of models and practices.

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS:

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program.

ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW GRANT AWARDS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

Please respond to the following requests for information:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation operates under the mission of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) which states; "DARS' mission: to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families." To this end, the Vocational Rehabilitation program, including the Supported Employment program ensures quality and equitable access to people with disabilities seeking career/vocational advancement by providing active outreach to marginalized communities, ensuring the availability of our offices/staff in every county in Virginia as well as co-locating many of our offices, and providing services in all of the one-stop centers. Through our partnerships with local educational school districts, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are available in every school district ensuring that equitable access occurs through K-12 educational programming. These services are also available to charter and alternative schools and by direct parent referral of a student aged 14-22. DARS VR actively partners with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to ensure services are available through our Community Service Boards (CSBs) located across the state. Through state grant funding, specialized Vocational

Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) serve substance abuse and mental health consumers. These services are available statewide.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation, including the Supported Employment program, is committed to equitable consumer participation based on the unique and individual needs of consumers. This commitment is outlined and further described in our state VR policies, that ensure equitable access to the vocational rehabilitation program and supported employment program across all populations represented in Virginia. DARS routinely reviews statewide demographic and consumer access data and creates district benchmarks to increase accessibility and outreach to representative populations. To further ensure access to services for all consumers, policies have been updated to ensure interpretation and translation services can be accessed by all consumers. Additionally, DARS Policy staff remains abreast of the disability access requirements in federal and state law and regulation.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Virginia General VR is committed to the provision of equitable access to all eligible consumers, and we continue to strategize operational enhancements to address barriers as they are identified. Identified barriers include:

- Geographic proximity to services for consumers
- Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Geographic proximity to services: Virginia VR maintains fully staffed, full-service offices (30 statewide) many are rural in designation and/or are co-located within one-stop centers to ensure the widest coverage and availability of services statewide. Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling staff are assigned individual schools to provide required Pre-ETS activities and outreach to surrounding communities. General VR Counselors are assigned by county and/or specific territory in urban areas. The use of community-based internet sites ensures that VR staff can work in the closest proximity to assigned caseloads. In addition, the use of video conferencing as well as payment of consumer transportation costs can mitigate consumer equity and access to services.

DARS will expand services to areas across the Commonwealth that have limited choice of provider options by: (a) identifying areas of the state where SE services are not readily accessible and (b) establish initiatives to assist existing ESOs to expand into underserved areas.

Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services: DARS continues to partner with Employment Service Organizations (ESO) statewide to build and sustain quality Pre-ETS programming/Work

Based learning for student and youth populations. This capacity building has expanded to ESOs that provide services across state lines which has resulted in new providers with strong reputations for service excellence moving into border communities in our southernmost points of the state. We will continue to support growth and expansion.

DARS receives and utilizes stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services (LTESS) state funds and fostering close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations.

The Virginia legislature provides state funds to Employment Services Organizations to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community-based employment options for persons with most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services is available to Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs.

Regional meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities are conducted across regions. These sessions address increasing supported-employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC continues to provide training and technical assistance to Employment Service Organizations related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment. Recently mentoring and technical assistance has been added to help develop the proficiency of provider staff to provide Customized Employment.

Implementing the Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report will provide information to VR counselors and their consumers on the performance of each Employment Services Organization to inform decisions regarding service provision.

DARS will obtain stakeholder insights and assistance through the Employment Services Organization Provider Network. The network represents a cross-section of stakeholders and DARS' staff meets regularly with the Network members to: (a) provide ideas and recommendations regarding program changes and procedures; (b) identify and address special regional needs, unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities, and needs of different populations of individuals with disabilities; and (c) provide information to the Department and help develop priorities and initiatives.

DARS will work collaboratively with the Employment Services Organization Provider Network. The network represents a cross-section of stakeholders and meets regularly to: (a) provide ideas and recommendations regarding program changes and procedures; (b) identify and address special regional needs, unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities,

and needs of different populations of individuals with disabilities; and (c) provide information to the Department and help develop priorities and initiatives.

Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities: Following the pandemic, access to some schools/districts had been restricted as relationships between Virginia VR and educational districts needed to be strengthened and rebuilt. 2022-23 brought increased outreach where access had been limited. VR districts held large events focused on services to students with disabilities that were well attended by educators and partners. These efforts brought increased VR visibility and educator engagement in the collaborative process. These efforts will continue and expand with the Virginia Department of Education Transition staff who have jointly held meetings with Special Education Directors (SPED), special education teachers and Virginia VR statewide.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Virginia VR began efforts to mitigate identified barriers in 2022 following the pandemic and as operations expanded. Community outreach and efforts targeted on increasing agency visibility are a key priority of all statewide field offices. These efforts will continue and will be sustained ongoing as an effort to increase public perception and general knowledge of the contribution the VR process makes to strengthening the lives and employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages.

Targeted community outreach to increase visibility and equity of service access began in 2023 which led to an increase in VR applications statewide. These efforts will continue and will be expanded based on demographic and service data as it informs our current efforts.

The expansion of Pre-ETS services for students with disabilities is the focus of our efforts in 2023-24. Increasing visibility, access to quality programming, expanding relationships with special education transition and school personnel as well as increasing vendor capacity as well as full utilization and expenditure of Pre-ETS set aside dollars are outlined in our corrective action plan.

Notes:

1. Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.
2. Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
3. Applicants may have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s)

and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

Virginia Works will utilize merit staff to provide employment services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act. This will remain the business practice for the agency regarding all programs and services that are currently using merit staff, as previously required by DOL regulations.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

With the guidance of the agency leadership, the Virginia Board for Workforce Development (VBWD), and in cooperation with the core programs and partners identified in this combined state plan, Virginia Works has established a staff development program to improve staff skills for providing services to employers and job seekers in the workforce system. All Virginia Works staff are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these training opportunities. Virginia Works has taken a two-pronged approach to training, with the Virginia Works Career Ladder, ensuring that workforce staff gain on the job experience in a structured manner, and the Sector Strategies Career Pathways Academy (SSCPA), formal online training to increase the skills of workforce staff.

The Career Ladder ensures compensation is fair and appropriate for similarly situated employees; establishes an effective manner to evaluate, address, and/or reward performance; establishes a career ladder that aligns with the agency's current succession planning efforts; and acknowledges the program complexity, technical skill set, and job duties required of each position. Virginia Works has now implemented a workforce staffing structure that follows a prescribed route of training and promotions to higher positions, indicating the level of training our staff has received. Workforce Service Trainees (WSTs) are those who are in initial training. They must accomplish a training program and demonstrate core competencies before moving up to a Workforce Service Representative (WSR) position (usually within 12 months). WSRs may then competitively apply for Senior WSR positions that deal with an expanded scope of workforce services, as well as higher level customer service inquiries.

The SSCPA is a formal online training, with an in-person classroom component, that trains workforce staff on how to utilize career pathways and industry-recognized credentials to plan out the steps job seekers need to take to achieve their career goals. This encourages our

staff to work with job seekers and employers so that those individuals can obtain a job at their experience level with a clear expectation on how to grow their experience and reach higher levels of employment.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION

The majority of Unemployment Insurance claims in Virginia are received either by telephone or internet. These claims are processed by VEC employees who receive regular training. The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division is committed to working with one-stop and Call Center staff to highlight prominent UI eligibility and qualification issues, and to keep staff apprised of the most efficient mechanisms in which to file for benefits.

The UI Quality Control team is responsible for providing training to workforce services staff. This training includes how to provide basic assistance such as password and address changes, as well as assisting customers with their weekly reports. The UI trainers also provide “just-in-time” training for unique situations in which workforce staff will need to provide more advanced UI services to customers. The trainings are conducted via webinar, as well as 2-3 classroom sessions, when circumstances allow. Additionally, a series of recorded training events on the new UI system (VUIS) are available to all staff, as necessary.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

Each Virginia Works office manager, in addition to two staff in each one-stop, will have access to the UI system and will be able to help instruct claimants on how to file for benefits and provide basic information on their claims. One-stop center customers will receive one-on-one help from qualified trained staff to help apply for UI benefits. The one-stop centers feature dedicated phone lines to our Customer Contact Centers and resource rooms with internet access for customers to apply for UI benefits. Staff in One-stop centers will have the ability to address common issues such as password resets and copies of PIN numbers, and help with weekly continuing eligibility requirements.

Individuals may file claims via telephone by calling the customer contact center or online through the UI Customer Service Portal. Information collected by VUIS is used to generate WP registrations so that claimants do not need to “re-key” the same information multiple times.

Assistance is available through dedicated phone lines connecting directly with the customer contact center, an online chat feature and/or center staff assisting claimants using computers in each center’s resource room.

When large groups of workers are impacted, the Rapid Response team, the Trade team and/or Virginia Works staff provide “how to file your claim” information and demonstration sessions. Virginia Works staff are available to work with claimants with specific assistance

needs and may use the language line to assist non-English speaking claimants or TTY equipment to assist claimants that are deaf.

The Commonwealth uses multiple strategies to connect UI claimants and unemployed individuals to the workforce system for provision of reemployment services, including Rapid Response activities, the RESEA program, the Trade program, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant.

Administered by the Rapid Response activities provide the earliest intervention for workers and businesses experiencing mass layoffs. Virginia Works is responsible for layoff aversion, and the Virginia Works provides re-employment services to workers who are laid off.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program identifies claimants exiting the military (UCX claimants) and claimants determined by the WPRS model as "most likely to exhaust." This early intervention strategy identifies claimants within the first five weeks of their claim and schedules them for an initial RESEA session by the seventh week of their claim.

RESEA participants must report to the workforce center in person where they receive a review of their UI rights and responsibilities, an orientation to the workforce system and services available and labor market information relevant to their career choices, assistance completing their job service registration and locating suitable jobs through the Virginia Workforce Connection job matching (labor exchange) system, a UI Eligibility Assessment and review of the work search. Additional reemployment services, such as resume development and job search skills development (interviewing, networking, etc.) will be available based on each claimant's needs, along with referrals to training and supportive services as detailed in each claimant's reemployment plan.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is a federal program established under the Trade Act of 1974. The TAA Program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) provides funds to the Commonwealth to serve eligible veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(4) and 4211(4),³ and other eligible spouses as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(5),⁴ and to perform outreach to employers. JVSG funds pay for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff positions.

Reemployment services are available to all UI claimants through all of Virginia's comprehensive or affiliate one-stop centers. Guidance and instruction about reemployment services are printed on UI claimants' confirmation letters and provided through the VEC Call Centers. Instructions about how to apply for UI benefits are also available through the VEC's website, with links to online application for UI benefits, as well as instructions for how to get registered as a job seeker in the Virginia Workforce Connection. Under Virginia UI law, claimants must register for reemployment/job service and register in the Virginia Workforce

Connection within 5 days of filing a UI claim. Failure to do so puts benefit receipt in jeopardy. All UI claimants are required to conduct and report weekly work searches to continue receiving benefits. All unemployed individuals are eligible to receive all Wagner-Peyser services and most other services offered by our partners, including job matching, training and education opportunities, on the job training, and registered apprenticeship programs.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

When individuals file a UI claim, an electronic interface queries the Virginia Workforce Connection system and either updates the existing Wagner-Peyser registration (active accounts) or creates a new Wagner-Peyser basic registration (inactive and new accounts). Claimants filing by phone are verbally advised to visit the Virginia Workforce Connection to complete and/or update their registration.

Additionally, Wagner-Peyser staff are able to run reports on the Virginia Workforce Connection that show claimants that filed in their region. WP staff call these individuals or send correspondence to ensure that they have completed their VWC registration. If not, the claimant is advised that their UI benefit will be at risk if they are not in compliance within a specific deadline. If at any time, workforce services staff working with claimants discover that the individual is not actively seeking work, the claim is referred to adjudication.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

Internet Filers

For claimants that file a regular UI claim via the Internet using the Customer Self-Service System, a basic Wagner-Peyser registration is created during the UI claims process. Staff are then able to run a report inside the Virginia Workforce Connection that displays the UI claimants in their region so that they may conduct outreach. UI claimants may access their Virginia Workforce Connection Dashboard page, where they are able to perform self-service actions such as job search registration, creating a resume, completing skills inventories, posting a resume, and searching for jobs.

Telephone Filers

Claimants completing their UI claim by telephone are verbally directed to go to the Virginia Workforce Connection website (www.vawc.virginia.gov) to complete their job service registration at the conclusion of the claims filing process.

Claimants selected for RESEA (via the WPRS Model) receive assistance updating or completing their job service registration as a component of the Initial RESEA session. Some claimants will make the updates prior to the Initial RESEA session, as requested in the RESEA "call-in" letter. Other claimants wait for the Initial RESEA session to receive individualized assistance. If the job service registration cannot be completed by the conclusion of the Initial

RESEA session, the claimant will be given a specific deadline for completion, after which, the claimant may be referred to Adjudication for failure to meet the registration requirements.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

Administration of the work test and eligibility assessments are required components of each initial RESEA session and follow up session. When an RESEA participant is not able to provide work search records, the participant receives given a deadline at least 48 business hours in the future to provide the records. If the RESEA participant does not provide the records, staff complete a data entry sequence that creates a work task for the Adjudication Team. There is a specific data entry sequence for each of the potential issues identified through the eligibility assessments.

The “My Reemployment Strategy” page in Virginia Workforce Connection identifies the number of job openings matching the claimant’s desired occupation and recommends the number of applications to be completed based on the number of openings available.

In addition to the self-service job finding and placement services claimants access through their “My Reemployment Strategy” pages, workforce center business services staff match claimants to open jobs, conduct in-center hiring events and job fairs and refer claimants when working to meet specific employer’s recruitment needs.

Claimants are required to file weekly claims for continued benefits. This may be conducted online or over the phone. Regardless of method utilized, the claimant must answer the following questions:

1. Were you able to and available for work during the week?
2. Were you actively seeking work during the week?
3. Provide the number of contacts you made for work.
4. If you made contacts for work, provide the names of the employers that were contacted.
5. Did you refuse any work or any offers of work during the week?
6. Did you fail to obtain work due to a positive drug test?
7. Did you enter or discontinue school or training?
8. Did you begin receiving or change the amount of any type of pension (including disability pensions) during the week?
9. Did you receive holiday, vacation, or Workman’s Compensation during the week?
10. Did you begin receiving or change the amount of any severance pay during the week?

11. Did you do any work, including self-employment, during the week? If the answer to this question is yes, the claimant is asked to enter the amount they earned before any deductions were made.

12. During the week, did you return to full-time employment? If the answer to this question is yes, then the claimant will be asked to enter the date they started working.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

As previously stated, Virginia will use WP funds to assist claimants in finding suitable employment through the Virginia Workforce Connection (the State's labor exchange database), as well as publicly advertised job fairs and general outreach to employers throughout the Commonwealth. Registration in this labor exchange of UI claimants is required by law with an additional report of work search provided weekly. Within the one-stop center, the WP staff will also make referrals to partner programs to provide training and education programs and other necessary resources to give UI claimants and other individuals registered in the Virginia Workforce Connection the skills necessary to obtain employment.

Wagner Peyser staff will assist each UI claimant to ensure that their background, skills, and interest information in the Virginia Workforce Connection are filled in completely. The staffed resource rooms in each of the one stop locations are available to assist those who need help and who need access to the Virginia Workforce Connection to find suitable employment. WP staff will determine the level of skills for each UI claimant (based on the information provided on their VWC record) to determine the types of jobs for which the claimant is best suited. Depending on their marketability to open jobs in the Virginia Workforce Connection, WP staff will match them accordingly and/or offer various job fair opportunities to those individuals. Workforce staff sit down with individuals who are entering the Virginia Workforce Connection for the first time to assess their employment and training history, employment goals, and whether or not they qualify for additional services through Title I partners, including enrollment in education and training programs. If there are no jobs available to match the skills of a UI claimant, he or she will be referred to appropriate partner agencies within the One-stop center, including, but not limited to WIOA Title I (Adult and Dislocated Worker), JVS, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education partners. Based on an initial enrollment screening, if the individual may qualify for services with other one-stop partners, that individual is referred to speak to applicable staff within the one-stop. Our partners then provide the individual with enrollment, training, and education resources that are available to them if they do qualify. In addition, the One-stops are establishing career pathways through community colleges that provide specific pathways from credentialing to employment. Training on this process is provided through the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

This Agricultural Outreach Plan sets policies and objectives in providing workforce services to the agricultural community, including migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs) and agricultural employers, in accordance with 20 CFR 653 and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The objective of Virginia Works is to assist job seekers and employers through the operation of a basic labor exchange system as described in 20 CFR 652, Subpart A. The Commonwealth of Virginia provides equitable services using the Virginia Workforce System to ensure that the full range of employment, training and educational services are available to MSFWs on a basis that is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to all other job seekers.

The Code of Federal Regulations at 20 CFR §653 sets forth the principal regulations of the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) concerning the provision of services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) and states the requirement that all services of the workforce development system be available to all job seekers in an equitable fashion. This includes ensuring MSFWs have access to these services in a way that meets their unique needs.

Each Virginia Works Center provides MSFWs with a full range of career and supportive services, benefits, protections, job training and referral services. Our staff are sensitive to the preferences, needs, and skills of individual MSFWs, and we carefully assess the availability of job and training opportunities suited to their specific employment needs.

Virginia Works employs Agricultural Specialists across the state who provide employment services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and agricultural employers. They are dedicated to assisting MSFW jobseekers and employers with all their employment-related needs. In collaboration with Virginia Work's partners, including Telamon, (WIOA 167 Grantee), MSFWs can access the full range of employment services. These services include:

- Virginia Workforce System registration assistance
- Job search assistance and referrals
- Referrals to training programs and other employment-enhancing opportunities
- Referrals to supportive services
- Referrals to partner agencies
- Farmworker rights and labor law information
- Complaint assistance

Virginia Works operates a statewide outreach program to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the local offices. The Agency has full-time Agricultural Specialists available in the Virginia Works offices in Bristol,

Charlottesville/Culpeper, Danville, the Eastern Shore, Fredericksburg, Prince George, and Winchester. Additionally, Virginia Works has five regional Agricultural Outreach Specialist who dedicate their time in the fields to outreach activities and complaint resolution. All but one of our Agricultural Specialist staff are bi-lingual in English and Spanish. They provide information to MSFWs about the services available through the One-stop centers from a variety of partners, including Telamon. They also provide information and guidance to MSFWs regarding their employment rights, responsibilities, and the employment service complaint system. In accordance with federal regulations found in 20 CFR §653, the Virginia Works employs a full time State Monitor Advocate to help ensure that the services provided by the Agency to MSFWs are "qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate" to the services provided to other jobseekers within the Commonwealth. The State Monitor Advocate is also responsible for the overall operation of the Employment Service complaint system.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry, with an economic impact of over \$82.3 billion annually. This industry provides more than 381,800 jobs in the Commonwealth. Virginia's agricultural production is one of the most diverse in the nation. Many Virginia commodities and products rank in the top 10 among all U.S. states. In 2021, Virginia ranked third nationally for the production of tobacco, fourth in seafood landings, sixth for apples, pumpkins and turkeys measured in head, eighth for peanuts, and ninth for broilers measured in head and pounds.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are a very important part of the agricultural industry in Virginia. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Virginia are predominantly of Hispanic descent, but there is a significant number of Haitian Creole workers, and that population has notably increased over the past three to five years. Jamaicans and South Africans also make up a small portion of the temporary and seasonal agricultural workforce in Virginia. H-2A workers hail from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Jamaica, and South Africa.

Although farmworker housing in Virginia is, for the most part, well maintained for H-2A use, our Agriculture staff investigates complaints and find instances where migrants occupy housing that does not meet minimum health and safety requirements.

To address the many issues faced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Virginia, the Code of Virginia provides for an Interagency Migrant Worker Policy Committee. This committee, administered by Virginia Works, and chaired by the agency Director, is comprised of representatives from appropriate state agencies whose services and jurisdictions involve migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their employers. The Committee addresses and formulates solutions to many of the employment-related issues faced by MSFW and agricultural employers within the Commonwealth.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN

WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

To develop an accurate assessment of the agricultural activity in the state, an extensive statewide survey of previous and projected agricultural and farmworker activity is conducted by Virginia Works each year. The Assessment of Agricultural Activity is developed in conjunction with input from Agricultural Specialist staff, local office personnel, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Telamon, Virginia Works partners, and members of numerous other organizations with knowledge of agricultural activity and MSFW employment. For Program Year 2023 (PY 23), approximately 15,000 MSFWs are estimated to be working in Virginia, including 5,300 H-2A workers. The top six labor intensive crops in Virginia for PY 23 are tobacco, apples, vegetables, including tomatoes and potatoes, Christmas trees, grapes, and nursery stock. Production acreage remains consistent or is increasing, and new technologies, including vertical and controlled environment agriculture, are bringing agricultural innovation to the forefront.

The following tables list the agricultural activity and MSFW employment throughout the nine federally-designated crop reporting areas of the Commonwealth. Projections of major labor-intensive crop activity and MSFW availability have been indicated by location and crop.

EASTERN SHORE - Onley

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tomatoes	Apr-Nov	1700	585	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Mar-July	480	265	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Vegetables	Mar-Oct	250	170	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Aquaculture	Sept-Apr	220	220	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Potatoes	May-Jul	90	120	Yes	Stable	Stable
Grapes	Jul-Oct	30	30	No	Stable	Stable

NORTHERN NECK - Warsaw/Fredericksburg

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Vegetables	Jun-Nov	450	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Nursery	Feb-Nov	400	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Grapes	Mar-Sep	150	125	Yes	Stable	Stable

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Aquaculture	Mar-Oct	75	60	Yes	Increase	Decrease

CENTRAL - Roanoke

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Apples	Feb-Nov	100	50	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Tobacco	Apr-Nov	80	25	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Feb-Dec	125	75	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Peaches	Apr-Aug	25	25	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Grapes	Mar-Oct	30	30	No	Stable	Decrease
Vegetables	Apr-Oct	30	30	No	Stable	Stable

CENTRAL - Petersburg

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Vegetables	Apr-Nov	200	60	Yes	Stable	Stable
Tobacco	Mar-Oct	125	50	Yes	Stable	Stable
Nursery	Feb-Jun	135	80	Yes	Stable	Stable
Melons	Apr-July	75	75	Yes	Stable	Stable
Grain	Mar-Aug	75	55	Yes	Stable	Stable
Sod	Mar-Oct	35	20	Yes	Stable	Stable
Hemp	Mar-Nov	30	5	Yes	Decrease	Stable

SHENANDOAH VALLEY - Winchester

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Apples	July-Nov	650	200	Yes	Stable	Decrease

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Nursery	Feb-Dec	200	180	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Grapes	Aug-Oct	125	60	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Peaches	July-Sept	30	20	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Vegetables	Mar-Nov	160	100	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Peaches	Jul-Sept	40	25	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Sod	Feb-Nov	25	25	Yes	Stable	Stable

SHENANDOAH VALLEY - Charlottesville

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Apples	Sept-Nov	400	60	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Peaches/ Nectarines	July-Sept	241	20	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Jan-June	410	250	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Vegetables	May-Sept	280	57	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Grapes	Aug-Oct	200	75	Yes	Increase	Stable
Hay and Cattle	June-Sept	15	5	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Sod	Mar-Oct	24	5	Yes	Stable	Stable

SOUTHSIDE - South Hill

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tobacco	Mar-Nov	699	336	Yes	Decrease	Stable
Hay	Feb-Dec	159	100	Yes	Stable	Stable
Nursery	Feb-Aug	97	77	Yes	Stable	Stable
Vegetables	Mar-Jul	70	57	Yes	Stable	Stable

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Hemp	Mar-Nov	246	15	Yes	Decrease	Decrease
Sod	Feb-Nov	25	10	Yes	Stable	Stable

SOUTHSIDE - Danville

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tobacco	Apr-Oct	1072	200	Yes	Decrease	Stable
Vegetable	Jun-Aug	40	10	Yes	Stable	Stable
Nursery	Feb-Aug	60	40	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Hay/Grain	Apr-Oct	40	10	Yes	Stable	Stable
Apples	Aug-Oct	40	20	Yes	Stable	Stable
Sod	Mar-Sept	15	5	Yes	Stable	Stable

SOUTHWEST - Bristol

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Christmas Trees	Oct-Dec	1377	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Vegetables	Mar-Nov	165	25	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Tree Fruits Grapes	June-Oct	150	100	Yes	Stable	Stable
Tobacco	May-Dec	50	45	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Mar-Oct	40	30	Yes	Increase	Stable
Berries	May-Aug	46	10	Yes	Increase	Stable
Hemp	Apr-Nov	20	2	Yes	Decrease	Stable
Cattle	Mar-Nov	24	12	Yes	Stable	Decrease

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Farmworkers in Virginia, particularly migrant farmworkers, are predominantly of Hispanic descent, but there is also a significant number of Haitian Creole workers and Jamaicans. H-2A migrants come from Mexico, and other Central American countries like Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti and Jamaica and there is also a small number of South African workers. Migrant workers, in particular, live especially difficult lives. They invest time and money to travel in search of employment to distant and remote places where housing is often expensive, overcrowded, and can be unsafe. Migrant families frequently struggle to find suitable, affordable childcare, and many migrant children suffer due to a lack of continuity in school.

Although farmworker housing in Virginia is generally well maintained, especially for H-2A use due to vigilant inspection by our Agricultural Specialist staff, there are still instances where migrants occupy housing that does not meet minimum health and safety requirements. Farmworker training opportunities are facilitated primarily by our WIOA one-stop partners, with particular focus on Telamon, the Virginia operator for the WIOA 167 program.

To address the many issues faced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Virginia, the Governor has established, through the Employment Stabilization section of the Virginia Unemployment Compensation Act, an Interagency Migrant Worker Policy Committee. This committee, administered by Virginia Works and Chaired by the VEC Commissioner, is comprised of representatives from appropriate state agencies whose services and jurisdictions involve migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their employees. This Committee addresses and formulates solutions to many of the issues faced by MSFW and agricultural employers.

To develop an accurate assessment of the actual number of MSFWs within Virginia, an extensive statewide survey of previous and projected agricultural and farmworker activity is conducted by the VEC each year. The Assessment of Agricultural Activity in the tables in Section E2 is developed in conjunction with input from VEC Agricultural Specialist staff, Virginia Career Works local office personnel, Virginia Cooperative Extension, data published by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Telamon, and members of numerous other organizations with knowledge of MSFWs.

The following table lists Virginia Farmworker Estimates for Program Year 2023.

Category	Number
Total Number of MSFWs during Peak Season	15,000
Total Number of MSFWs during Low Season	5,000
Total Number of Seasonal Workers	5,000
Total Number of Migrant Workers*	8,200
Total Number of H-2A Workers	5,500
Total Number of Year-Round Farm Workers	41,800
All Farmworkers Including Year-Round Farm Workers*	55,000

**Includes H-2A workers*

MSFWs-Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Migrant worker-a worker who travels to an area to perform temporary or seasonal agricultural labor and is not able to return to his permanent residence each night after work.

Seasonal worker-a worker who performs temporary or seasonal agricultural labor and resides in the area where he is employed.

Year-round farm worker-worker who performs agricultural labor on a year-round basis.

According to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry by far, with nothing else coming a close second. The industry has an economic impact of \$70 billion annually and provides more than 334,000 jobs in the Commonwealth. The industries of agriculture and forestry together have a total economic impact of over \$91 billion and provide more than 334,000 jobs in the Commonwealth. Every job in agriculture and forestry supports 1.7 jobs elsewhere in Virginia's economy.

In addition to its tangible benefits such as farm cash receipts and jobs, agriculture provides many intangible benefits. These include recreation, tourism, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, flood mitigation, improved water quality and soil stabilization.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

1. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

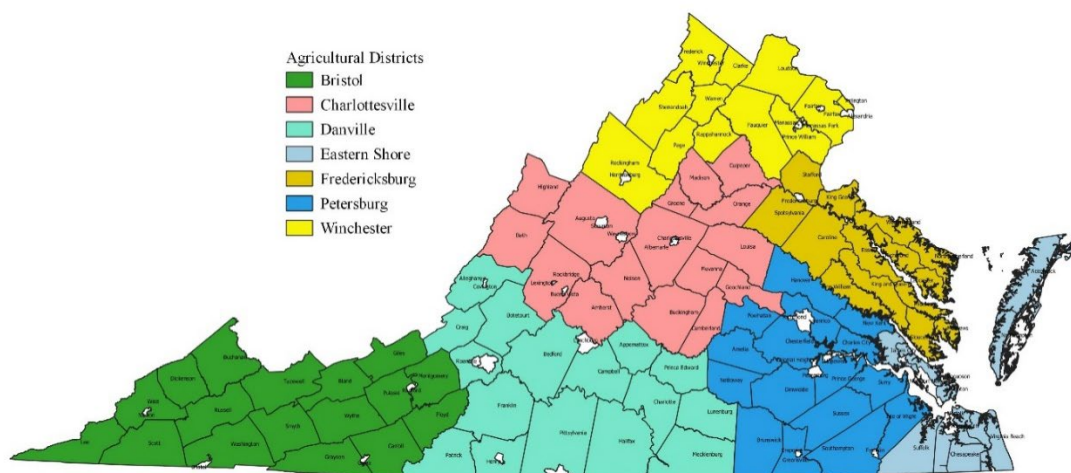
Assessment of Available Resources:

For the duration of this plan cycle PY 24-27, Virginia Works will use one full-time Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist in our Virginia Works offices in Bristol, the Eastern Shore,

Danville, Charlottesville/Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Petersburg/Prince George, and Winchester. In addition, the agency has five regional Agricultural Outreach Specialist positions in Bristol, Danville, Eastern Shore/Tidewater, Warsaw, and Harrisonburg. This staff is fully bilingual and spend all their time conducting outreach and providing services to MSFWs working in Virginia. The State Monitor Advocate also conducts outreach during visits to areas where MSFWs live and work. All offices utilize the Agricultural Specialist staff full-time for outreach duties during peak seasons for the crop activities in the service areas. All outreach activities are conducted in accordance with the 20 CFR 653.

To augment the Virginia Works outreach efforts, staff from the State's WIOA 167 Grantee, Telamon, under an interagency cooperative agreement, will supplement the agency's efforts to contact a majority of the MSFWs in Virginia during the peak of the agricultural season. The map below shows the Agency's Agricultural Outreach Service Areas.

Virginia Employment Commission 2023-2024 Agricultural Services Areas



PY 24-27 Outreach Plan Service Areas

Bristol Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist- Deborah Johnston

Agriculture Outreach Specialist-Will Jacobs

200 Bob Morrison Blvd. Suite 100

Bristol, VA 24201

Service Area: Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe

Charlottesville Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Ricardo Ortiz

210 E. Stevens St.

Culpeper, VA 22701

Service Area: Albemarle, Amherst, Augusta, Bath, Buckingham, Culpeper, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Greene, Goochland, Highland, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Rockbridge

Danville Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Beatriz Gonzalez

Agricultural Outreach Specialist-Logan Lorenzo

Housing Inspector-Brenda Blankenship

211 Nor Dan Drive, Suite 1055

Danville, VA 24540

Service Area: Appomattox, Alleghany, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Charlotte, Craig, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Price Edward, Roanoke

Eastern Shore Outreach Service Area

****Federally Designated Significant, Bi-lingual Office****

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Anna Trevino

Agricultural Outreach Specialist-Luis Echevarria

25036 Lankford Highway, Unit 16

Onley, VA 23418

Service Area: Accomack, Northampton, Cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, James City, York

Petersburg Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Ronda Moreta

4300 Crossings Blvd.

Prince George, VA 23875

Service Area: Amelia, Brunswick, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, Sussex

Winchester Outreach Service Area

****Federally Designated Significant Office**

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Jesus Diaz

419 N. Cameron St.

Winchester, VA 22601

Service Area: Arlington, Clark, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren

Fredericksburg Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Antonia Garcia

Agricultural Outreach Specialist-Andres Ordaz

10304 Spotsylvania Avenue, Suite 100

Fredericksburg, VA 22408

Service Area: Caroline, Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Matthews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland

Numerical Goals:

During the plan cycle, Virginia Works staff are required to contact at least 51% percent of the total MSFWs population (over ½ of the estimated peak MSFWs in the state) to offer employment services. The required average is at least 40 outreach contacts per week. Actual goals for outreach contacts are listed below by individual local office. Also included is the state total outreach goal for PY 23 and the most recent publication of the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Estimates by county. Outreach goals are established before the start of each program year, as these goals are based on the estimated farmworker population in the Commonwealth at that time.

Program Year 2023

OFFICE	SEASONAL	MIGRANT	H-2A	TOTAL WORKFORCE	OUTREACH GOAL
Bristol	345	129	1528	2002	1022
Charlottesville	645	200	603	1448	739
Danville	658	288	980	1926	982
Eastern Shore	734	1400	825	2959	1510
Fredericksburg	1098	111	356	1565	799
Petersburg	561	288	488	1337	682
Winchester	325	185	710	1220	623
State	4,366	2,601	5,490	12,457	6,357

The WIOA 167 Grantee, Telamon Corporation, under a cooperative agreement, will supplement Virginia Works outreach with approximately 2,000 MSFW contacts. Joint outreach activities may be arranged and conducted when possible. For this plan cycle, Telamon Corporation, and any other individual or organization, will be able to refer MSFWs to services listed at www.virginiaworks.gov and search for employment opportunities through the Virginia Workforce Connection found at www.vawc.virginia.gov. MSFWs may review job openings at Telamon Corporation, and select prospective positions for which they may be qualified. This capability exposes MSFWs to more employment opportunities and ensures that they are better informed about the labor market. Through the self-service system or with the assistance of Telamon Corporation staff, MSFWs can be registered for employment services before they even visit one of the Virginia Works locations. Collaboration and referrals, team building, and staff training will ensure that MSFWs within the Commonwealth have full access to WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services. Personal meetings at any service location can be facilitated by contacting Agricultural staff directly.

In addition to the cooperative agreement with Telamon, the agency plans to partner more closely with other agencies and organizations that have an interest in MSFWs. Virginia Works currently has an excellent working relationship with the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Central Virginia Legal Aid's Farmworker Assistance Project, Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, and the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division. To better assist MSFWs, it intends to strengthen current partnership agreements and develop them as the need arises.

Proposed Outreach Activities (20 CFR 653.107)

All Virginia Works staff that are assigned MSFW outreach responsibilities use a variety of techniques to educate MSFWs about career services available at all Virginia Works locations. Personal contact with MSFW is the primary outreach technique. Depending on the local circumstances, and with consideration for employer and MSFW preferences, outreach may occur in agricultural fields during the work day. Many MSFWs, especially those working on piece rate, prefer to continue to work rather than stop to talk with an outreach worker. In that situation, agency staff will meet with MSFWs during lunch or after work at their living quarters. During these meetings, agricultural staff, in a language appropriate for the MSFW, present information on the services available in Virginia Works locations. They use written handout materials that are specific for each location. These handouts contain a full listing of partners, social service agencies, organizations, and special groups with an interest in serving MSFW needs. Specific written information is provided on the Employment Service Complaint system, and all outreach materials are available in English and Spanish and can be translated into other languages as appropriate. The Agricultural Specialist provides outreach materials in a language that the MSFWs in their area can understand. The staff describe, in detail, farmworker rights and responsibilities, the employment service complaint system and they provide business cards to MSFWs that contain contact information. The State Monitor Advocate has overall responsibility for the operation of the Employment Service Complaint system at the state level.

In all cases, outreach is afforded to MSFWS in order to explain the benefits of coming into the local office to receive the full range of services available.

Such services include referrals to agricultural and nonagricultural jobs, information on training and supportive services, with special emphasis on services available through Telamon Corporation, career guidance, job development, and the partner services available at all Virginia Career Works locations. Occasionally, Agricultural Specialist staff conduct joint outreach with Telamon staff.

Virginia Works will conduct detailed follow-up with all U.S. workers referred either by the agency or other partners on H-2A job orders who:

- Did not report for a scheduled interview
- Were not afforded an interview
- Were interviewed but not hired
- Quit before the end of the contract period
- Were later terminated by the employer

Agricultural Specialist staff will attempt to contact each U.S. worker referral to determine if qualified workers were offered employment. Case notes will be entered into the Virginia Workforce Connection on all referrals as appropriate.

2. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Staff training is an ongoing process. Initial training for new Agricultural Specialist staff serving in Virginia Works Centers has been and will continue to be conducted on outreach, the employment service complaint system, MSFW definitions, other regulatory requirements, and the Agricultural Recruitment System. Additional training for selected staff, including Local Office Management and District Managers, will be provided through attendance at regional training sessions conducted by the State Monitor Advocate and the Agriculture and Foreign Labor Certification Manager. Training will also be conducted by the State Monitor Advocate for other staff, as needed. Monthly conference calls are conducted with all Agricultural Specialist staff, the State Monitor Advocate, and the Foreign Labor Certification Manager. Agricultural Specialist staff will participate at local grower meetings and combined training will be conducted with Telamon when feasible. Virginia Works will continue to work closely with labor law enforcement agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society to continue knowledge exchange and to ensure quality services are available to agricultural workers and employers.

3. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues

Virginia Works maintains an Agricultural Services Unit with a professional, bi-lingual staff that coordinates all phases of the agency effort to provide employment services to agricultural employers and farmworkers. Agricultural Specialists are located in eight of our Virginia Works locations and serve agricultural workers and employers throughout the Commonwealth. They all work closely with the state's major grower associations, the Virginia State Horticultural Society, the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the Farm Bureau, the Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services, and other interested agencies. One of the objectives of these working relationships is to disseminate information to agricultural employers and workers about the services available from Virginia Works and our partner agencies. With the cooperation of these organizations, the Foreign Labor Services Unit conducts farm labor seminars for agricultural employers on a statewide basis. In addition, participants are given information and updates on the following topics:

- Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986
- Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act
- Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS)
- Farm Labor Contractor Registration
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- Child Labor Laws and Pesticide Safety
- Agricultural Labor Certifications (H-2A Program)
- Unemployment Insurance for Agricultural Workers

For the planning period 24-27, the Agricultural and Foreign Labor Services staff will conduct several seminars around the state for employers who use temporary agricultural labor. During these meetings, potential agricultural employers are often identified and their need for MSFW labor discussed. The staff will also attend several grower association conferences and trade shows to disseminate information to employers and plans to attend VA Cooperative Extension grower meetings. On a more technical level, the agency uses various procedures to match agricultural employers and U.S. workers and will use the internet-based Virginia Workforce System for matching jobseekers and employers. This system provides for staff assistance as needed, but also allows both jobseekers and employers to create their own files and find each other. Agricultural job orders, to include H-2A job orders, can be created by employers with final oversight by Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services staff. As a result of the internet-based system, we have created a much wider dissemination of all agricultural job orders. This increase in access promotes the employment of U.S. workers in Virginia agriculture.

Additional resources include the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) for job orders, local and regional circulation of agricultural job orders, close coordination with WIOA

service providers, and direct contact with grower associations. The agency's website contains a State Monitor Advocate Section and an Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services Section which has many useful forms, publications and links, a list of the Agricultural Services Staff, copies of active H-2A job orders and information of interest to the agricultural community, including employers and MSFWs. There are also links to Telamon and to other resources to assist farmworkers and agricultural employers. Organizations serving farmworkers may access these sites and make appropriate information available to job seekers.

Virginia continues to be a significant user of the H-2A program. Although some agricultural employers have reduced the number of workers they need in certain crops, they continue to diversify in the varieties of crops grown. We have seen a large increase in the use of this program over the past several years as demand for a legal and stable workforce has grown as the prevalence of traditional migrant workers decreases. We continue to strive to match qualified workers to agricultural openings in Virginia, but this continues to be difficult due to the diminishing migrant population. We hope to expand the use of the Virginia Workforce System among agricultural employers and workers alike to better match applicants with job openings.

Agricultural Specialists have been specifically trained on the unemployment insurance program and provide information regarding the program requirements to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers during outreach and they provide written materials to farmworkers and agricultural employers upon request. They provide Spanish assistance to MSFW claimants and provide claims filing and processing assistance as needed in support of all our Virginia Works offices.

In accordance with WIOA, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system, using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business, using partnerships and leveraged resources-including economic development partnerships-to serve business customers, and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia in that we will develop both non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and strive to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals. With renewed emphasis on customer relations, operations, resource management and professional development, Virginia Works will work to make the Commonwealth an ideal place to work and conduct business.

4. Providing outreach staff professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Additional training for Agricultural Specialists and other selected staff, including Local Office Management and District Managers, will be provided through attendance at regional training sessions conducted by the State Monitor Advocate and the Foreign Labor Certification Manager. Training will also be provided by the State Monitor Advocate on the Employment Service Complaint system as needed. Monthly conference calls are conducted with all Agricultural Specialist staff, the State Monitor Advocate, and the Foreign Labor Certification

Manager. Staff will participate in USDOL training, at local grower meetings and combined training will be conducted with Telamon when feasible.

5. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups

The WIOA 167 Grantee, Telamon Corporation, under a cooperative agreement, will supplement Virginia Works outreach with approximately 2,000 MSFW contacts. Joint outreach activities may be arranged and conducted when possible. For this plan cycle, Telamon Corporation, and any other individual or organization, will be able to refer MSFWs to Virginia Works services listed at www.virginiaworks.gov and search for employment opportunities through the Virginia Workforce Connection found at www.vawc.virginia.gov. MSFWs may review job openings at Telamon Corporation and select prospective positions for which they may be qualified. This capability exposes MSFWs to more employment opportunities and ensures that they are better informed about the labor market. Through the self-service system or with the assistance of Telamon Corporation staff, MSFWs can be registered for employment services before they even visit one of the Virginia Works local offices. Collaboration and referrals, team building, and staff training will ensure that MSFWs within the Commonwealth have full access to WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services. Personal meetings at any Virginia Works location can be facilitated by contacting Agricultural staff directly.

In accordance with the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system; using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business; using partnerships and leveraged resources, including economic development partnerships, to serve business customers; and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia by developing non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and striving to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals. With renewed emphasis on customer relations, operations, resource management, and professional development, Virginia Works will strive to make the Commonwealth an ideal place to work and conduct business.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

DESCRIBE THE STATE AGENCY'S PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR:

A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers

Virginia Works will meet the minimum requirements for providing services to MSFWs as listed in 20 CFR 653.112. Virginia Works will provide equitable services for:

- MSFWs referred to jobs.

- MSFWs for whom a service is provided
- MSFWs referred to supportive services
- MSFWs receiving career guidance
- MSFWs receiving job development

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

The agency will meet the minimum requirements for providing services to MSFWs as listed below:

Minimum Service Level Indicators	Compliance Levels
Individuals placed in a job	Parity with Wagner-Peyser performance
Median earnings of individuals in unsubsidized employment	Parity with Wagner-Peyser performance
Individuals placed long term in non-agricultural employment	Parity with Wagner-Peyser performance
Reviews of Significant MSFW One Stop Centers	100%
Field checks conducted when 10 or more job orders have been placed through the Agricultural Recruitment System	25%
Outreach contacts per week	40 contacts per week
Processing of Complaints	100%

For the 24-27 planning cycle, Virginia Works will:

- Collect career service indicator data for the career services specified in WIOA sec. 134(c)(2)(A)(xii).
- Collect data, in accordance with applicable ETA Reports and Guidance, on:
 - The number of MSFWs contacted through outreach activities
 - The number of MSFWs and non-MSFWs registered for career services
 - The number of MSFWs referred to and placed in agricultural jobs
 - The number of MSFWs referred to and placed in non-agricultural jobs
 - The percentage of MSFW program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
 - The median earnings of MSFW program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
 - The percentage of MSFW program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program

- The number of MSFWs served who identified themselves as male, female, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or White
- Agricultural clearance orders (including field checks), MSFW complaints and apparent violations, and monitoring activities
- Any other data required by the U.S. Department of Labor

Monitoring

Monitoring Virginia Workforce Centers throughout the year for compliance with MSFW regulations will be conducted by both the State Monitor Advocate and by the agency's EO staff.

The significant local offices in Winchester and on the Eastern Shore will have an annual in-season on-site review by either the Regional Monitor Advocate, or the State Monitor Advocate, or both together. These offices will maintain at least one fully bi-lingual Agricultural Specialist who will spend the majority of their time in the field during peak harvest for their respective areas.

All other local offices will have on-site reviews done by the State Monitor Advocate as appropriate or will have desk reviews done using data from the agency automated reporting system, using the format suggested by USDOL: "Virginia MSFW Indicators of Compliance, Qualitatively Equivalent and Quantitatively Proportionate Services: ES Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Applicants Compared with Services to All Non-MSFWs."

Virginia continues to be a significant user of the H-2A program. Although some agricultural employers have reduced the number of workers they need in certain crops, they continue to diversify in the varieties of crops grown. Virginia Works continues to strive to match qualified workers to agricultural openings in Virginia, but this continues to be difficult due to the diminishing migrant population.

In accordance with the WIOA, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system; using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business; using partnerships and leveraged resources, including economic development partnerships, to serve business customers; and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia by developing non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and striving to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals.

ii. [How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services](#)

Employment Services Provided to Agricultural Employers

For the upcoming planning period 24-27, the Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services Unit will conduct several seminars around the Commonwealth for employers who use temporary agricultural labor. During these meetings, potential agricultural employers are often identified and their need for MSFW labor is discussed. The Unit will also attend several grower associations conferences and trade shows to disseminate information to employers and plans to attend VA Cooperative Extension grower meetings. On a more technical level, the

agency uses various procedures to match agricultural employers and U.S. workers. The agency will use the internet-based Virginia Workforce System for matching jobseekers and employers. This system provides for staff assistance as needed, but also allows jobseekers and employers to create their own files and find each other. Agricultural job orders, to include H-2A job orders, may be created by employers with final oversight by Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services staff. As a result of the internet-based system, we have created a much wider dissemination of all agricultural job orders. This increase in access promotes the employment of U.S. workers in Virginia agriculture.

Additional resources include the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) for job orders, local and regional circulation of agricultural job orders, close coordination with WIOA service providers, and direct contact with grower associations.

At the state level, the Governor has formed a MSFW interagency policy committee to coordinate overall services to MSFWs in Virginia. This committee, which meets quarterly or as needed, brings together agencies which serve the needs of MSFWs. Within this forum, and by way of relationships developed as a result, substantial coordination is provided in order to respond to the local needs of MSFWs and agricultural employers.

Virginia continues to be a significant user of the H-2A program. Although some agricultural employers have reduced the number of workers they need in certain crops, they continue to diversify in the varieties of crops grown. The agency continues to strive to match qualified workers to agricultural openings in Virginia, but this continues to be difficult due to the diminishing migrant population. The agency hopes to expand the use of the Virginia Workforce System among agricultural employers and workers alike to better match applicants with job openings.

In accordance with WIOA, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system; using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business; using partnerships and leveraged resources, including economic development partnerships, to serve business customers; and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia by developing non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and striving to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals. With renewed emphasis on customer relations, operations, resource management, and professional development, the agency will work to make the Commonwealth an ideal place to work and conduct business.

B. Marketing the Complaint System to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

Agricultural Specialist staff conduct outreach and provide information to MSFWs on their rights and responsibilities, employment-related laws, and the employment service complaint system. The employment service complaint system is fully described in a language MSFWs can understand and business cards are provided to MSFWs with contact information if they have a complaint. The State Monitor Advocate has overall responsibility for the operation of the Virginia Works Service Complaint system at the state level. Information on the complaint system is available through all Virginia Works Centers, and each center displays an ETA approved complaint poster containing contact information for complaint specialists and the State Monitor Advocate. Services for MSFWs include a full explanation of the complaint

system and assistance with filing complaints, and staff work to provide resolution to complaints at the local level whenever possible. Our Agency refers complaints and violations to enforcement agencies whenever appropriate.

C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

For the planning period 24-27, the Agriculture Labor Services team will conduct several seminars around the Commonwealth for farmworkers and for employers who use temporary agricultural labor. They will provide specific information on the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System and on the use of the H-2A program.

Staff will attend association conferences and trade shows to disseminate information to employers and plans to attend VA Cooperative Extension grower meetings. On a more technical level, the agency uses various procedures to match agricultural employers and U.S. workers, including using the Virginia Workforce Connection System for matching jobseekers and employers. This system provides for staff assistance as needed, but also allows jobseekers and employers to create their own files and find each other. Agricultural job orders, to include H-2A job orders, may be created by employers with final oversight by Agriculture Services staff.

Additional resources include local and regional circulation of agricultural job orders, close coordination with WIOA service providers, and direct contact with grower associations. In addition, the agency's website www.virginiaworks.gov contains a State Monitor Advocate Section and an Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services Section with forms, publications and links, a list of the Agricultural Services Staff, copies of active H-2A job orders, and information of interest to the agricultural community. There are links to Telamon services and other resources to assist farmworkers and agricultural employers. Organizations serving farmworkers may access these sites and make appropriate information available to job seekers.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the State Workforce Agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and establish new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The WIA 167 Grantee, Telamon Corporation, under a cooperative agreement, will supplement Virginia Works outreach with approximately 2,000 MSFW contacts. Joint outreach activities may be arranged and conducted when possible. For this plan cycle, Telamon Corporation, and any other individual or organization, will be able to refer MSFWs to VIRGINIA WORKS services listed at www.vec.virginia.gov and search for employment opportunities through the Virginia Workforce Connection found at www.vec.virginia.gov/virginia-workforce-connection. MSFWs may review job openings at Telamon Corporation and select prospective positions for which they may be qualified. This capability exposes MSFWs to more

employment opportunities and ensures that they are better informed about the labor market. Through the self-service system or with the assistance of Telamon Corporation staff, MSFWs can be registered for employment services before they even visit a One-stop center. Collaboration and referrals, team building, and staff training will ensure that MSFWs within the Commonwealth have full access to WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services. Personal meetings at any Virginia Works location can be facilitated by contacting Agricultural Specialist staff directly.

B. Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Virginia Works solicited information and suggestions from WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees, Virginia Legal Aid, appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested organizations. Before submitting its final outreach plan, the State provided a copy of this plan to the organizations listed and allowed 30 days for review and comment. The State took all comments received into full consideration when formulating the final plan, and it informed all commenting parties in writing whether their comments were incorporated and, if not, the reasons they were not incorporated.

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Mr. Roberto Melendez, District Director
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C. Data Assessment

REVIEW THE PREVIOUS FOUR YEARS WAGNER-PEYSER DATA REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE. NOTE WHETHER THE STATE HAS BEEN MEETING ITS GOALS TO PROVIDE MSFWS QUANTITATIVELY PROPORTIONATE SERVICES AS COMPARED TO NON-MSFWS. IF IT HAS NOT MET THESE GOALS, EXPLAIN WHY THE STATE BELIEVES SUCH GOALS WERE NOT MET AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO IMPROVE ITS PROVISION OF SERVICES IN ORDER TO MEET SUCH GOALS.

For PY 22, Virginia Works met Equity Indicators for service to MSFWs. Information reported on the LEARS Report, and described therein, is a result of an extrapolation using available data from Local Office Reports, the Virginia Workforce Connection, and longstanding historical service trends.

We expect to demonstrate improvement in overall performance and improvements in serving MSFWs within the one stop environment. We assert that we are providing equitable services to MSFWs in Virginia. We have provided and will continue to provide our Agricultural Specialists and other Wagner Peyser staff with specific training with respect to meeting WIOA performance goals and documenting services within the one-stop system.

D. Assessment of Progress

THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT WAS ACHIEVED BASED ON THE PREVIOUS AOP, WHAT WAS NOT ACHIEVED AND AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE STATE BELIEVES THE GOALS WERE NOT ACHIEVED, AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO REMEDY THE GAPS OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE COMING YEAR.

The below tables reflect Virginia Works' most recent performance as outlined in the Commonwealth of Virginia Agricultural Outreach Plan. Failure to meet outreach goals in the Eastern Shore, Emporia and Petersburg offices was due to staff vacancies for a portion of PY 22.

MSFW OUTREACH PERFORMANCE BY OFFICE

OFFICE	Total OUTREACH GOAL PY 22 (MSFW+H-2A)	OUTREACH ACHIEVED PY 22	STATUS
BRISTOL	887	1267	Met
CHARLOTTESVILLE	674	379	Did Not Meet
DANVILLE	691	1157	Met
EASTERN SHORE	1,472	1,244	Did Not Meet

EMPORIA	577	530	Did Not Meet
FREDERICKSBURG	728	736	Met
PETERSBURG	406	327	Did Not Meet
WINCHESTER	648	667	Met
STATE	6,083	6,135	Met

For PY 22, the State met our outreach goal and Virginia Workforce Connection data reports reflect that Virginia Works met all the Equity Ratio Indicators and the Minimum Service Level Indicators. Piece rate earnings are not reflected within the system, but based on worker and employer interviews, MSFWs averaged \$12-\$17 per hour.

MSFW OUTREACH GOALS BY OFFICE FOR PY 23

OFFICE	SEASONAL	MIGRANT	H-2A	TOTAL WORKFORCE	OUTREACH GOAL
Bristol	345	129	1528	2002	1022
Charlottesville	645	200	603	1448	739
Danville	658	288	980	1926	982
Eastern Shore	734	1400	825	2959	1510
Fredericksburg	1098	111	356	1565	799
Petersburg	561	288	488	1337	682
Winchester	325	185	710	1220	623
State	4,366	2,601	5,490	12,457	6,357

E. State Monitor Advocate

THE PLAN MUST CONTAIN A STATEMENT CONFIRMING THE STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THE AOP.

This plan for agricultural services for the Commonwealth of Virginia was prepared by the State Monitor Advocate with the assistance of agency management staff, local office managers, Telamon, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Specialist staff who directly serve MSFWs and agricultural employers. The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved this Agricultural Outreach Plan.

Vocational Rehabilitation - General

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

(A) STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.

All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

[check box] (A) is an independent State commission.

[check box] (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1 st Term	10/1/2021
Parent Training and Information Center	2 nd Term	10/1/2022
Client Assistance Program	2 nd Term	10/1/2022
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	2 nd Term	10/1/2022
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Vacant	
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st Term	10/1/2021
Business, Industry, and Labor	2 nd Term	10/1/2021
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st Term	10/1/2023
Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	
Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st Term	10/1/2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st Term	10/1/2021
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	2 nd Term	10/1/2021

State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1 st Term	10/1/2023
State Workforce Development Board	1 st Term	10/1/2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)		

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

The Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (General) meets quarterly, as required in Section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act. Meetings are generally scheduled to occur at the Virginia DARS Headquarters, which is centrally located and provides ample space and administrative support. The location of the meeting is accessible. Interpreter services are provided, and other accommodations may be requested prior to the meeting. The Council, in partnership with Virginia DARS, and in collaboration with advocacy groups, consumers, and their families, continues to ensure quality services for Virginians with disabilities to achieve meaningful employment, self-sufficiency, and independence. Quarterly meetings remain an active and invaluable forum for the Council to provide advice, information, and support for Virginia DARS' vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

Virginia DARS is currently engaging in active and ongoing recruitment efforts for interested individuals who meet the criteria for SRC membership vacancies to meet the composition requirements in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. In Virginia, gubernatorial appointments are facilitated by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The DARS' Commissioner's Office liaises directly with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office on SRC appointments and the SRC Administrator actively interfaces with interested individuals on the requirements associated with the application process. Throughout the agency, DARS staff encourages individuals who qualify for appointment by virtue of professional or personal position or experience to consider serving on the SRC. In Virginia, gubernatorial appointments are an ongoing process, with approximately 900 appointments made throughout the year. Virginia DARS will continue to encourage interested individuals to submit their applications to the Secretary of the Commonwealth to be considered for gubernatorial appointment to the SRC.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

Input from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is essential to improving the provision of vocational rehabilitation services across the Commonwealth. Consulted regarding multiple aspects of the vocational rehabilitation program, the SRC is provided and requests information on a variety of issues including but not limited to the consumer satisfaction

survey, reports on various agency initiatives, updates on WIOA performance measures as well as internal dashboards, the VR services portion of the combined state plan, collaborative efforts with workforce and community partners, and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The SRC has played a critical role in providing input in these areas as well as others. Through this process of sharing information and feedback the SRC developed the following recommendations that are also included in their annual report and the VR services portion of the combined state plan.

SRC Recommendation 1: The median hourly wage for vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers for FFY 2022 was \$12.00 per hour in all districts but one, which is a marked improvement from previous years and continues to exceed the minimum wage. The SRC requests continued briefings and additional information on WIOA performance measures, including the goals and targets established for these measures and DARS' progress towards those goals. In particular, DARS should examine the median wage performance and performance gaps in each district, looking at the demographics of DARS clients, with the expectation that the median hourly wage increases to \$13.00 per hour (\$15 per hour in the Northern district) to best align with increases to the minimum wage and the current economy.

DARS Response 1: All districts, except New River (average \$12.50 per hour) reached this target during the program year. Northern district reached the target of \$15.00 per hour.

SRC Recommendation 2: Equity in the provision of VR services is imperative. In order to achieve successful closures, DARS should examine barriers, successes, and service delivery, paying particular attention to marginalized and underserved populations, as well as aligning efforts with available Census population and workforce participation data. DARS should:

- a. Target outreach toward marginalized and underserved populations, working consistently toward representative customer demographics— particularly with regard to race, ethnicity, age, and location.

DARS Response 2(a): All districts were required to implement and sustain community-based outreach to non-traditional referral sources. In the most recent program year, each district provided a variety of outreach events that were well attended by local community members. DARS offices, in partnership with DARS HR, are working to engage representative demographics in staff recruitment efforts. Partnerships with the Pathways grant includes targeted outreach and recruiting for bilingual staff.

Community PERT mobile units are being implemented to reestablish relationships between PERT and local school areas that are currently underutilizing DARS services. PERT staff traveled to King William County to provide an independent living exploration service to students at the local high school. This community effort provided two days of interest inventories, career awareness exposure, and

independent living assessment. Independent living activities included developing a budget for real life situations, cooking, kitchen safety, medication management, hygiene, self-esteem, and problem-solving assessments. Community PERT mobiles will result in additional services through PERT for students in these localities. In 2024, mobile visits are scheduled for Lancaster County, Northumberland County, Richmond County, and Westmoreland County.

In its second year, the Pathways to Careers grant is now in 15 offices and has worked with over 200 clients. DARS has partnered with the Department of Labor's Division of Registered Apprenticeship and Cyber Civilian to develop a peer recovery specialist registered apprenticeship and are beginning to assist clients enter this career. The Pathways grant is working on the development of a Spanish language job club and has targeted the grant's advisory workgroup to Hispanic participants to address this underserved population and increase the agency's effectiveness in serving this community. The grant has focused on creating a Hispanic Advisory board to better inform the grant team and reach unserved and underserved populations. Under the grant, data is shared with offices regarding who is being served and who is not being served. This approach is increasing counselor awareness of unserved and underserved populations.

- b. Continue to support and encourage interested applicants for appointment to SRC vacancies, including individuals from underserved populations, and collaborate constructively with the Secretary of the Commonwealth regarding such vacancies.

DARS Response 2(b): Recruitment for appointments to the SRC continues with an eye towards ensuring a diverse Council that ensures representation of underserved populations. Regular communications occur with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office to meet this objective.

- c. Provide updates on the Commonwealth's Alternative Hiring Process and its impact on the employment of individuals with disabilities.

DARS Response 2(c): In FFY 2023, 1,083 individuals requested a Certificate of Disability (COD). Of those individuals who are not currently receiving VR services, 265 completed the process and were eligible to be issued a COD. As of July 1, 2023, current Classified/Full-Time Virginia employees became eligible to apply for a COD for the Alternative Hiring Process; 3 CODs have been issued to current State Employees. Of COD applicants, 255 were referred to DARS' offices.

For individuals currently receiving VR services, 381 CODs were issued to DARS clients and 18 to DBVI clients. These CODs were issued by the Vocational Counselors and not through the COD Link. Therefore, a total of 646 Certificates of Disability were issued in this Fiscal Year.

Prior to January 2023, neither DARS nor DHRM were able to obtain data on how many state applicants were hired through the Alternative Hiring Process, as the previous DHRM Recruitment Management System could not provide that data. More specific data should be available through the new DHRM system in the coming years.

Additionally, with regard to the employment of individuals with disabilities, over the past five years, representation of individuals with disabilities in the Executive Branch has increased from less than 1% to approximately 4%.

This improvement, in part, can be attributed to the requirement of an annual Statement of Commitment signed by each Executive Branch Agency Head and a comprehensive strategy, which includes communication, education and awareness, compliance and retention. In addition, and through the federal Pathways grant, DARS funds a full-time liaison position embedded within the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to focus solely on the employment of individuals with disabilities by state agencies. The incumbent in the position assisted with the design of the alternative hiring process, provides training and technical assistance to agency human resource (HR) offices, identifies jobs in state agencies for recruitment to people with disabilities, and collaborates with counselors in the DARS Vocational Rehabilitation offices to identify qualified applicants for state jobs.

DARS collaborated with DHRM to offer Windmills disability awareness training to the human resources community and agency hiring managers. This training focuses on the culture of disability in the workplace, change to attitudinal barriers, and creating new perspectives on the unique abilities of individuals; as well as increasing awareness of the role that attitudes play in the employment of individuals with disabilities to encourage the employment and advancement of individuals with disabilities.

DARS partnered with DHRM on an awareness campaign for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This included a communication plan and outreach to Agency Heads of Executive Branch agencies and Agency HR Directors and HR staff. The social media campaign highlighted tools related to disability etiquette, hiring, and retaining employees with disabilities, making workplaces accessible, and job accommodations.

SRC Recommendation 3: The SRC recommends that DARS continues collaborative efforts with Centers for Independent Living, as well as other community partners and agencies, to offer financial empowerment education, skill-building opportunities, and career pathways education to clients.

DARS Response 3: DARS partnered with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) on the CFPB and VADARS Economic Reinforcement Network (CaVERN). DARS is completing its CaVERN curriculum with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The CaVERN program provided technical assistance and training on the “Your Money, Your Goals” toolkit. The program took place over the course of two years and was designed to incorporate financial literacy concepts into service provision. CFPB and DARS provided instruction on the Your Money, Your Goals curriculum, and materials,

including sessions on paying bills, tracking income and benefits, and choosing financial products and services. Multiple supplemental sessions were held on topics including Racial Economic Equity and Tax Assistance for Lower-income Taxpayers. Incorporating financial empowerment concepts into service provision leads to greater client outcomes and helps increase opportunities for self-sufficiency, and the community created through the CaVERN program encourages networking, community building, and localized resource mapping. The final CaVERN session will be held before the end of 2023. This has been a joint project with Kevin Koziol, Center for Independent Living Coordinator for DARS. The focus has been on Center for Independent Living involvement.

SRC Recommendation 4: DARS is poised to play an important role in the Commonwealth's continued focus on workforce services and development. The SRC requests that it be kept updated on these initiatives, as well as the ability to collect data on referrals through the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal.

DARS Response 4: In April 2023, the Virginia Career Works portal was launched as mandatory for all Field Rehabilitation Services (FRS) intake/eligibility clients. However, in July 2023, Workforce Portal implementation was suspended pending review and potential enhancements by the Secretary of Labor, Bryan Slater. FRS offices are not currently utilizing the Portal because of the suspension. FRS is accepting any referrals that still come through the Portal and are assigned to offices for services. When the Portal review is complete and active again, FRS will return to mandatory use of the Portal. No statistics are currently available due to the short implementation time prior to the suspension.

DARS is in the process of adding an additional Business Development Manager to improve district coverage. The team participated in a National Employment Team summit and began to coordinate employer engagement activities with their national counterparts, leading to increased opportunities for DARS clients who may find employment opportunities in neighboring states.

The DARS workforce programs unit has continued to promote and deliver Windmills training to employers and has added additional trainers to allow for training upon request. The DARS Business Services team and select placement counselors, vocational evaluators and assistive technology staff presented 52 Windmills trainings to over 1,751 individuals with state and federal agencies, businesses, and community partners through the end of September 2023. The team added a module this year, "Taking Emotions out of Emotional Disabilities," which explores the effects of employers' reactions to emotional disabilities and how employers can offer reasonable accommodations to create an emotionally neutral environment. DARS provided over 4,400 services to employers, including assistance with Work Opportunity Tax Credits, recruitment, consultation, labor market information, assessments, subsidized on the job training, and training in employment issues and pre-employment training.

SRC Recommendation 5: The SRC would like DARS, including WWRC, to expand virtual programs that deliver VR resources and education to those who could benefit from remote learning and services, while remaining mindful of technological literacy or access challenges that may prevent some Virginians from fully utilizing these options.

DARS Response 5: The Driving Program at WWRC is working on several initiatives that will enhance virtual service delivery along with the added positive result of increasing WWRC's ability to serve more clients across the state. Virtual services expanded during COVID, and providers have found that the virtual delivery of certain aspects of driver education can augment and facilitate instructional methods that are normally associated with an in-person classroom. WWRC is working to integrate and utilize CANVAS within the driving program to assist with organizing instructional materials and the potential to reach clients remotely. For the classroom component of driver's education, WWRC has provided one-on-one virtual instruction to a total of 46 clients since 2021 (by comparison, in-person training serves an average of 72 clients per year). The use of CANVAS will continue to allow for a more organized and efficient delivery method for both the client and the instructor, in-person and virtually.

WWRC is working on developing a virtual re-exam course to be approved by DMV. "Re-exam" refers to coursework that must be completed to allow a client to take the learner's permit test after 3 consecutive fails. Being able to offer a virtual re-exam class delivered via CANVAS will reach a larger number of clients in the state, many of whom it may not be easy to come to WWRC for in-person services.

The Communication Services Department at WWRC also developed virtual service delivery methods during the pandemic. Since 2020, 26 clients have received one-on-one virtual service for various needs such as evaluation/treatment, assistive technology (alternative and augmentative communication), and fluency. Therapists in this department are currently providing in-person instruction in the pragmatics of communication in all the vocational training programs and work readiness programs (WRP) at WWRC. The potential to offer this service virtually to other clients in the Commonwealth is being explored based upon need and staffing resources.

Virtual PERT is a service line that was originally developed when students were not able to come to WWRC during COVID closures. The virtual option continues to be beneficial for students who may live in more remote areas or who do not elect to participate in campus-based programming. This program is best utilized by students early in the transition process. The program uses common virtual technologies to deliver services to students originally in their homes and now mostly at their home school. Content for the virtual program consists of PowerPoint presentations, videos and interactions with PERT On-Site Rehabilitation Counselors and PERT Residential staff. To date, 552 students have been served.

WWRC is providing virtual case management services to DARS clients participating in the 11-week IT Essentials Bootcamp. The program prepares clients to sit for the A+ Certification test by participating in the CompTIA curriculum. In addition to the CompTIA coursework, clients also participate in curriculum to enhance their workplace readiness behaviors, study skills, and trade-related academic skills. At the conclusion of the bootcamp, case management responsibilities transfer to the DARS vocational rehabilitation counselor for transitional planning and job seeking services.

SRC Recommendation 6: The SRC recommends that DARS evaluate the quality and inclusion of career pathways in Individual Plans for Employment and ensure VR Counselors are empowered to advocate for services that result in career pathways being utilized and achieved. The SRC requests that data currently being collected on this objective be shared once it can be meaningfully reported.

DARS Response 6: There is not currently a way to show how IPEs result in career pathways without a year or more of data. By March 2024, statistics will be gathered to show how IPEs had an impact on career pathways for clients in successful rehabilitation.

SRC Recommendation 7: The SRC would like DARS to serve more transition age youth, particularly students with disabilities. DARS should continue to increase outreach to local education agencies, families, and students regarding the availability of and access to transition and Pre-ETS services. This should include collaboration between DARS, the Virginia Department of Education, other community partners, and especially local education agencies. DARS should identify local education agencies in which Pre-ETS services are under-utilized and conduct direct outreach. Data on referral sources to DARS (i.e., school or parent) for Pre-ETS or other transition services, types of services utilized, geographic trends, and information on the frequency with which students who receive Pre-ETS services move on to VR services should be evaluated.

DARS Response 7: While conducting outreach to local educational agencies, the DARS transition team has developed and participated in numerous events. These include CREATE Transition events in the Southwest and Hampton districts, presentations with other DARS staff including Connect for Success, Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education (VCASE), Mission Transition Start on Success, and the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). The presentations were attended by parent resource center personnel, special education directors, special education teachers, and military education leaders from across the Commonwealth.

A Model Interagency Pre-ETS Program collaborative with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has been initiated in Gloucester High School, and will be in Hampton and Phoebus High Schools, as well as Albemarle and Monticello High Schools. This multi-year project will be expanded to all six districts and will focus on the strategic training and enhancement of Pre-ETS through a professional development and support model. VCU will provide multistage training designed to enhance the

knowledge and skills of DARS staff and Pre-ETS vendors, and improve communication and collaboration between DARS, schools, families, and Pre-ETS service providers. The components of the model will include: 1) annual regionally based training for DARS counselors and other staff; 2) the facilitation of a work-based learning course; 3) a framework to assess a student's level of needs and flow of service provisions; and 4) regional-specific technical assistance. These components will build upon each other, leading to multi-pronged development that will directly impact student outcomes.

The Transition Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) has been emailed to every Special Education Director in Virginia's public high schools. The future quantitative results will be shared with the Council as well as the qualitative information obtained from identified focus groups.

DARS has entered into a several agreements to enhance services to underserved areas of the state and populations:

- Bloom Consulting has started to provide services in the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck and other Fredericksburg Schools which have all been identified as underserved. In addition to Bloom Consulting, a Drone Academy Day has been marketed to appropriate DARS staff in these underserved areas.
- An updated contract with the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) to provide continued peer mentoring services to at-risk students is almost finalized. The continued contract was recommended based on positive feedback from DARS Offices in Northern Virginia, Harrisonburg and on the Peninsula.
- A contract with the Center for Family Involvement has been submitted to procurement for next steps. This collaborative partnership will provide services to culturally and linguistically diverse transition aged youth and their families with culturally sensitive information and strategies for navigating Pre-ETS. A goal of the program is to develop at least five products for culturally and linguistically diverse youth with disabilities and their families that considers preferred idioms, customs, literacy, and formats as well as generational preferences.

DARS has contracted with the National Technical Assistance Center-The Collaborative (NTACT-C) for technical assistance to ensure that internal processes are in place to obtain needed data to make informed decisions regarding Pre-ETS and the continuum of transition services.

DARS has actively participated in the federally funded CAPE Youth project to increase collaboration and effectiveness in serving pre-ETS and transition cases. The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth (CAPE-Youth) is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, The Council of State Governments, and the K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University. The Center was created in 2019 by the U.S. Department of Labor. It seeks to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities by helping states build capacity in their youth service delivery

and workforce systems. As a result of this partnership, two CAPE-Youth fellows recorded a webinar for DARS counselors and clients on how to ask for accommodations in college. This recording is now available on our website. Additionally, DARS participated in a social network analysis through this project which has resulted in a planning meeting with other WIOA partners designed to increase collaboration and outcomes for transition, justice involved and out of school youth with disabilities. DARS has actively developed paid summer work experiences for transition students and paid work experiences for DARS clients with recently earned credentials but no work experience to add real experience to a resume.

SRC Recommendation 8: The SRC encourages DARS to examine opportunities for improved employee diversity in its workforce through increased recruitment efforts and to provide data-driven updates and objectives to the Council.

DARS Response 8: The Field Rehabilitative Services (FRS) Director is working with Human Resources in recruiting at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), on talent development websites, and with colleges, universities, and organizations for diversity in the recruitment of qualified applicants. Data updates are unavailable at this time. Moving forward, the FRS Director and other program Directors will provide quarterly updates on these recruitment efforts.

SRC Recommendation 9: The SRC encourages DARS' continued development of an updated language and disability access policy to ensure increased access for all clients.

DARS Response 9: Policies have been updated to ensure interpretation and translation services can be accessed by clients. DARS Policy staff remains abreast of the disability access requirements in federal and state law and regulation.

(B) COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

DARS concluded the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in March 2022. The CSNA was conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCURRTC). The CSNA is both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the VR needs of individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the agency and the SRC focused on determining the needs of (1) individuals with most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services; (2) individuals who are minorities, including individuals who been unserved or underserved; and (3) individuals who are served through other components of

Virginia's statewide workforce development system. In addition, the need to establish, develop, or improve Employment Service Organizations, also known as community rehabilitation programs, that serve individuals with disabilities was assessed. In general, the process included: a review of pertinent literature; data analysis of internal DARS data via use of the RSA-911; analysis of statewide educational, business and demographic data; and focus groups with employment services organizations, DARS staff, Virginia Department of Education staff, individuals who have received services from DARS and their families. Sources for disability statistics included the American Community Survey (ACS), the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance (BRFSS), the Social Security Disability Benefits Database, and data from the Virginia Department of Education.

Virginia Population Estimates of Disability

The 2022 American Community Survey, indicated that the total non-institutionalized civilian population for Virginia in 2022 was estimated at 8,412,758, inclusive of all ages. Of these, 1,045,046 individuals reported a disability, which translates to a 12.4% prevalence rate (+/- 0.2 margin of error) within the state. The percent of disability reported in Virginia in 2022 was lower in comparison to the percent of individuals with a disability observed nationwide (16.3%) during the same year. Further, the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium (2023) reported on the difference in employment rates between people with and without disabilities.

Data from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS-2022), collected by the United States Census Bureau, was used to summarize the most recent disability estimates and demographic information available for the state of Virginia. Findings on disability type from the ACS-2022 are presented by age group (i.e., under 18, ages 18-64, and 65 and older).

For individuals with a disability in Virginia under age 18, cognitive difficulty was the most prevalent (4.7%, n=66,394). Followed by self-care difficulty (1.4%, n=19,352), vision difficulty (0.9%, n=16,034), hearing difficulty (0.5%, n=10,006) and ambulatory difficulty (0.6%, n=8,867).

Among individuals between ages 18 and 64, cognitive difficulty was most prevalent (4.4%, n=224,993), followed by ambulatory difficulty (4.3%, n=223,972), independent living difficulty (3.4%, n=173,296), hearing difficulty (2.0%, n=102,872), vision difficulty (2.0%, n=101,569), and self-care difficulty (1.6%, n=81,200).

For those 65 and older, ambulatory difficulty was most prevalent in 2022 (19.6%, n=271,749) with rates for other disability types as follows: independently living difficulty (12.8%, n=177,762), hearing difficulty (12.6%, n=174,974), cognitive difficulty (7.2%, n=99,104), self-care difficulty (7.0%, n=97,350), and vision difficulty (6.2%, n=85,753).

In examining the gap in employment for those with a disability compared to those without a disability, Virginia ranked 25th among all 50 states regarding the size of gap. In terms of total employment rate for people with disabilities, Virginia ranked 22nd highest compared to all other states.

In FFY 2022, 88.5% of DARS clients served were classified as most significantly disabled. In FFY 2023, the percentage of most significantly disabled decreased 3.4% to 85.1%.

According to the RSA-911, Virginia had 37.6% in FFY 2022 and 36.8% in FFY 2023 of persons with most significant disabilities employed. It is estimated that 5,046 individuals with most significant disabilities will require supported employment services in 2024. The average cost per person in 2024 is estimated to be \$4,551.96 and the total cost is estimated to be \$22,969,190.16.

In the CSNA, Supported Employment was mentioned as the 6th top need of clients with 8.3% responding as such. DARS spends a large proportion of funds on supported employment and this need seems to be well met in relation to other client needs. The DARS staff focus group conducted as part of the CSNA found that 26.4% (n=31) of counselors stated that the population they worked with most frequently were the most significantly disabled.

B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Minority Demographics

Individuals with disabilities who are minorities were a special focus of the 2022 needs assessment.

Gender: Disability rates were slightly higher for females compared to males in both the U.S. and in Virginia according to the ACS-2022. The disability rates were higher in Virginia at 12.6% (n=544,323) compared to 12.2% (n=500,723) for males. The gender breakdown for clients served in 2022 is shown below:

- Male - # served (%) n = 11,816 or 59.6%
- Female - # served (%) n= 7,950 = 40.1%
- Does not wish to self-identify - # served (%) n= 57 or 0.3%

DARS served more males than females in 2022. While self-selection for DARS services has to be considered, females are underrepresented in the DARS population.

Race/Ethnicity: The highest percentage of disability within a minority racial category was observed for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander persons in Virginia.

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, the racial breakdown for all Virginians with disabilities is shown below:

- Black/African American: 13.2% (n=216,157)
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino: 13.4% (n=667,686)
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 8.0% (n=68,243)
- American Indian and Alaska Native alone: 9.9% (n=3,543)
- Asian alone: 6.8% (n=39,237)
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone: 23.2% (n=1,799)
- Some other race alone: 7.4% (n=25,263)

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- Two or more races: 10.2% (n=81,76

Race/Ethnic Breakdown of Clients served by DARS in FFY22 are shown below:

- Black/African American: 33.2% (n=6,671)
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino: 54.6% (n=10,959)
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 5.61% (n= 1,137)
- American Indian and Alaska Native alone: 0.2% (n=34)
- Asian: 2.8% (n= 555)
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone: 0.2% (34)
- Some other race alone: 0.8% (n=484)
- Two or more races: 2.4% (n=29)

The minority race/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in the DARS population include; Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans/American Indians. Self-selection for DARS services may play a role in the race/ethnicity of clients served by DARS.

BARRIERS FOR MINORITIES/COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The CSNA sought to address the barriers and needs of minority populations. The results of the on-line survey resulted in 41.5% of respondents indicating that they thought there were racial or ethnic minority barrier differences to the general population of people with disabilities.

The CSNA identified several barriers and needs to accessing services by minority populations. The following list addresses identified needs and areas to address as they were identified as “often a barrier” by respondents and are listed from most frequently cited to least:

- Access to technology (Internet, text, phone, etc.)
- Knowledge of available DARS services and supports
- Accessibility to DARS (Limited public transportation)
- Limited understanding of how work impacts benefits
- Communication issues/language barriers
- Limited social/family supports
- Disability related transportation issues
- Client frustration with speed of service delivery
- Difficulty completing the application
- Limited interagency collaboration
- Developing, with clients, the tasks and supports needed to accomplish the vocational goal
- Limited services and supports in the DARS district
- Inadequate assessment
- Developing rapport with clients
- Difficulty completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Developing an achievable vocational goal with clients

C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

DARS is actively engaged at both the state and local level in the Workforce Development System. DARS is represented on the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD). A memorandum of understanding is in place with each Local Workforce Development Board and DARS works closely with the American Jobs Centers (one-stops) to assure access to individuals with disabilities. The VR program currently is co-located as a one-stop partner in Martinsville, Danville, and South Boston. DARS also has a physical presence in other Workforce Board one-stops. Additionally, DARS has been supporting training on career counseling, motivational interviewing, as well as Customized Employment for our workforce partners.

In FFY 2022, the following number of DARS clients were served by the Virginia Workforce System:

- One-stop centers: n= 105
- Other WIOA Programs in Virginia: n= 1,100
- Wagner-Peyser: n=3
- Other Virginia State Agencies: n= 447

Results of the 2022 CSNA indicate that 36% of DARS staff work with the Workforce Development Centers on a consistent basis. The majority of respondents indicated that they worked with workforce development centers frequently (53.7%). The infrequent use of these centers may be related to staff's perceived effectiveness of the centers in working with individuals with disabilities.

The CSNA identified multiple barriers and needs to accessing services through workforce development centers and addressing the vocational needs of DARS VR clients. The following list addresses identified needs and areas to address as they were identified as "needs significant improvement" by respondents and are listed from most frequently cited to least:

- Staff training on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- Communicating with DARS counselors
- Partnering more effectively with DARS
- Outreach to individuals with disabilities to increase/improve knowledge of services
- Including individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients
- Programmatic accessibility
- Communicating with clients who have language barriers
- Physical accessibility

D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

Data from the Virginia Department of Education on students with disabilities (SWD) enrolled either in public school, private school or home schooled for the 2022-2023 school year were obtained from the Virginia Department of Education. There were 162,708 students in grades nine through twelve who were considered to have disabilities in the 2022-2023 school year. The breakdown by disability is shown in the table below:

Virginia Students with Disabilities Grades 9 to 12, 2022 to 2023 School Year

Disability	Total
Autism	7,451
Deaf-Blindness	*0
Developmental Delay	*0
Emotional Disturbance	3,882
Hearing Impairments	327
Intellectual Disabilities	3,714
Multiple Disabilities	1,018
Orthopedic Impairments	114
Other Health Impairments	13,420
Specific Learning Disabilities	21,034
Speech or Language Impairments	680
Traumatic Brain Injured	144
Visual Impairments	196
Total	51,980

*Fewer than 10 students total across Virginia and are therefore reported at zero.

The largest percentage of students enrolled in school year 2022-23 in grades 9-12 have specific learning disabilities (40%), followed by other health impairments at 26%.

The pipeline of potential DARS clients, those enrolled in pre-K through 8th grade comprise 109,714 students. The majority (29%) of clients in grades pre-k through 8th grade have a specific learning disability, followed by other health impairments (20%), speech or language impairments (19%), autism (16%), developmental delay (6%), and emotional disturbance (3%).

DARS SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Counting only cases of SWD using the variable “age at plan signature”, DARS served an average of 8,348 clients over the last three years. This is about 16.4% of all high-school aged SWD in Virginia according to the Virginia Department of Education. DARS can expect an increase in SWD through the 2023-2024 school year with an estimated 9,680 served. The number of SWD would then decline to 9,662 by 2025-2026.

Using a more strict definition of SWD including age, the SWD has a section 504 accommodation, or the SWD is receiving services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP), DARS has averaged 4,530 students over the last three years. This represents about 6% of the total high school population. Assuming approximately 6%, DARS can expect to see an increase in clients over the next four years to around 5,732 SWD served. An increase to 5,798 would be expected by the 2025-2026 school year.

The types of impairment for Virginia’s students will also change over the next four school years. The number of clients with Autism, intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities are expected to decrease slightly while emotional impairments are expected to increase. This is depicted in the table below.

	Autism	Emotional	Intellectual	Learning Disability
2018	2,120	1,026	1,616	6,657
2020	1,398	1,065	825	5,580
2021	1,509	1,171	767	4,730
2022	1,685	1,345	823	4,728
2023	1,775	1,395	1,014	4,584

DARS continues to reserve and expend 15% of its VR grant funds on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services for students with disabilities and 50% of its Supported Employment funds for youth with the most significant disabilities.

The 2022 CSNA found that Virginia students with disabilities have met the state targets for enrolling in higher education or CIE within one year of leaving high school. (Goal >65%,

Achieved 65.87%) They did not meet the target for enrolling in higher education. However, they were within less than one percentage point. (Goal >35%, Achieved 34.4%)

Pre-ETS offers students with disabilities an early start at career exploration and preparation for adult life. Beginning at age 14, students with disabilities can connect with VA DARS for Pre-ETS. DARS works with students, their families, their schools and community partners to enrich transition planning and support students with gaining knowledge and experiences necessary so they may make informed decisions about their future. Topics covered through Pre-ETS include: 1) career exploration; 2) work-based learning experiences; 3) exploration of education and training programs for after high school; 4) workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills; and 5) self-advocacy. The 2022 CSNA conducted a survey of transition educators focused on these five "required" activities of pre-employment transition services asking VA transition educators if these activities are 1) available, 2) accessible, and 3) coordinated. Questions also included asking educators about the unmet needs of transition-age youth.

Responding educators indicated that they thought the most unserved/underserved students were individuals with intellectual disabilities (21.6%), followed by individuals with learning disabilities (18.2%), and individuals with the most significant disabilities including individuals with multiple impairments (19.3%). The vast majority of respondents, 89.4%, reported that they support students who need DARS services. In addition, the majority of respondents reported that they know who their school's DARS counselor is.

The CSNA identified unmet needs to Pre-ETS services through the survey of transition educators. The following lists Pre-ETS services identified as "an unmet need" by respondents listed from most frequently cited to least:

- Work-based learning experiences
- Workplace readiness training
- Job exploration counseling
- Instruction in self-advocacy
- Counseling on Educational and Training Options

The CSNA also identified multiple potential reasons for unmet needs to students accessing transition services. The following list addresses identified reasons as they were identified as "yes, this is a barrier" by respondents and are listed from most frequently cited to least:

- Need for training on Pre-ETS for families and students
- Limited internship and apprenticeship opportunities
- Limited work-based learning opportunities
- Need for training on Pre-ETS for teachers / school personnel
- Limited school personnel for transition planning
- Limited coordination of services between the school and DARS
- Communication / Collaboration with the Business Community
- Difficulty promoting career pathways for students
- Insufficient Funding

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- Lack of communication between DARS and the schools
 - Student disability barriers

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- Communication / Collaboration with the Business Community
- Difficulty promoting career pathways for students
- Insufficient Funding
- Lack of communication between DARS and the schools
- Student disability barriers

Through the Cooperative Agreement between DARS and VDOE and the annual review of local agreements, transition career services and Pre-ETS are coordinated under IDEA and seek to address the gaps and unmet needs identified above.

The local school division and DARS assign a representative whose responsibility includes transition planning. Secondary students with disabilities are informed of DARS and Pre-ETS available through DARS starting at age 14. This may occur by means of the student’s IEP meeting and other appropriate methods/processes.

A DARS counselor may be invited to students’ IEP meetings when VR transition services or Pre-ETS are discussed. When the counselor is unable to attend the meeting, other arrangements will be made for participation, such as a conference call or provision of written information regarding the student’s current or planned transition services or Pre-ETS.

The school’s primary transition contact and the primary DARS counselor assigned to the school coordinate regular meetings and communications. The school’s contact will provide needed student records documenting a student’s disability and a signed consent and information release.

The school’s primary transition contact will assist DARS staff in accessing the school environment and identifying opportunities to work with students.

DARS is responsible for the coordination, provision, and/or payment of rehabilitative/transition goods and services for eligible or potentially eligible individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, agency policies, and guidelines. If there are questions as to who pays for a service, DARS and the local school division personnel should discuss whether the purpose of the service is related to an

employment outcome or education attainment; and whether the service is customarily provided by the school or by DARS.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

According to the 2022 CSNA, the majority of both stakeholders (74%) and staff (75%) believed that Virginia's community rehabilitation programs, or Employment Services Organizations could enhance service options. Examples of service options requested that are allowed VR services included Customized Employment and Pre-ETS.

DARS will work collaboratively with the Employment Services Organization Provider Network. The network represents a cross-section of stakeholders and meets regularly to: (a) provide ideas and recommendations regarding program changes and procedures; (b) identify and address special regional needs, unique needs of rural, suburban and urban communities, and needs of different populations of individuals with disabilities; and (c) provide information to the Department and help develop priorities and initiatives.

(C) GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES.

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

Input from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is essential to improving the provision of vocational rehabilitation services across the Commonwealth. Throughout the year they are consulted regarding multiple aspects of the vocational rehabilitation program including but not limited to the consumer satisfaction survey, WIOA performance measures, the CSNA, various agency initiatives, and collaborative efforts with workforce and community partners. The SRC provides formal recommendations annually which DARS works to address and provides updates to the Council. Based upon recommendations and feedback from the SRC throughout the year, current WIOA performance measures, a comprehensive analysis of data outcomes, and the CSNA; potential goals, priorities, and strategies were discussed with the SRC at the November 2023 Retreat and Quarterly meeting. During the meeting, the goals, priorities, and strategies were reviewed, discussed, edited by DARS staff and members of the State Rehabilitation Council. Based on those discussions, the goals, priorities, and strategies

were revised and agreed upon to reflect the joint intent of DARS and the State Rehabilitation Council.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

A. Support innovation and expansion activities;

B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

[text box: List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority]

Goal 1: Discover and create new opportunities that expand employment options for our VR consumers and that are more effective in meeting our Commonwealth's workforce demands.

Strategy 1.1: Work collaboratively with business and workforce development partners to identify the hiring needs of employers and match those needs with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our VR consumers.

Strategy 1.2: Support and grow innovative career pipelines through the Pathways project, apprenticeships, and the state alternative hiring practice (AHP).

Strategy 1.3: Offer access and clear pathways to skills, training, and credentials that support good jobs in the community with family sustaining wages.

Goal 2: Prepare VR consumers for the current and future labor market.

Strategy 2.1: Provide services and supports leading to expanded education, training and employment opportunities for adult and youth VR consumers. Expand virtual programs that deliver VR resources and education to those who could benefit from remote learning and services, while remaining mindful of technological literacy or access challenges that may prevent some Virginians from fully utilizing these options.

Strategy 2.2: Ensure that VR consumers have the necessary credentials to compete for jobs in Virginia's new economy.

Strategy 2.3: Enhance the use of labor market and occupational information by VR staff and VR consumers for career planning and Employment Plan development.

Goal 3: Improve and expand opportunities for youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities, to promote future educational and employment success.

Strategy 3.1: Ensure federal and state funding are maximized by the reservation and expenditure of the required 15% of funds allocated to Pre-ETS.

Strategy 3.2: Maximize the use of talent and skills within the agency by reviewing existing vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC), administrative, and other staff roles, making any necessary changes to improve the provision of services and outcomes.

Strategy 3.3: Implement improved training to ensure that new counselors have the skills necessary to effectively serve youth.

Strategy 3.4: Develop and revise processes, guidance, and internal controls for reviewing data as it applies to the 15 % reservation requirement. This includes monitoring expenditures, staff time for Pre-ETS, properly allocating services to Pre-ETS and other elements.

Strategy 3.5: Continue to onboard community rehabilitation providers to provide Pre-ETS.

Strategy 3.6: Maximize the use of Pre-ETS authorized activities.

Strategy 3.7: Expand work experiences for transition age youth, preferably while still in school, to improve employment outcomes at graduation.

Strategy 3.8: Develop a Youth Advisory Board to provide consultation to DARS to inform service delivery for Pre-ETS and employment services for students and youth with disabilities regarding gaps in services, including areas of the state the services are lacking.

Strategy 3.9: Identify best practices, create strategies, and partner with other agencies to better serve students and youth with disabilities to ensure a pathway and appropriate services to meet their employment goals.

Goal 4: Ensure accountability and effective performance management.

Strategy 4.1: Effectively and efficiently utilize personnel and fiscal resources to optimize agency performance and the availability of services for VR consumers including a review of staffing and administrative resource utilization.

Strategy 4.2: Provide services that result in meaningful and measurable outcomes through objective assessment of performance and ongoing innovation and process improvement.

Goal 5: Prioritize outcomes and employment in competitive integrated settings for unserved and underserved populations including, individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school and those with mental health conditions.

Strategy 5.1: Develop sustainable services and supports for individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school such as peer mentoring supports and family engagement services for VR participants transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school.

Strategy 5.2: Create an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) system to utilize wraparound supports in an organized manner.

Strategy 5.3: Improve employment outcomes for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders by expanding innovative service delivery models such as Individual Placement Supports (IPS) and continue efforts with the US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) ASPIRE Project.

Goal 6: Expand provider capacity and services to better support and improve outcomes for VR clients through partnerships with the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, state and local agencies, community rehabilitation providers and other entities.

Strategy 6.1: Provide peer mentoring/support specialist services to improve engagement and outcomes for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders including collaborating with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to create a service definition for peer mentoring/support specialist, determine acceptable credential for peer mentor/support specialists, and create a system to onboard peer mentors/support specialists.

Strategy 6.2: Improve provider capacity for SE and Pre-ETS by providing training internally and externally to strengthen skills.

Strategy 6.3: Develop SE and Pre-ETS training based on gaps and needs identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA), Employment Services Organization Performance Report, stakeholder feedback, and program evaluations.

Strategy 6.4: Expand services to areas across the Commonwealth that have limited choice of provider options by: (a) identifying areas of the state where SE services are not readily accessible and (b) establish initiatives to assist existing ESOs to expand into underserved areas.

Strategy 6.5: Increase access to Pre-Employment Transition Services through the expansion of Community Rehabilitation Providers including existing partners Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

Strategy 6.6: Identify and implement effective means to ensure seamless service delivery and supports among the partners, to include one-stop centers and Centers for Independent Living.

(D) EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS.

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

Priority 1: Preparing VR consumers for the current and future labor market.

Goal 1.1: Providing services and supports leading to expanded education, training and employment opportunities for adult and youth VR consumers.

The Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) continues to emphasize measurable skill gains (MSG PY22 statewide 77.6%) and credential attainment (PY22 statewide 32.3%) to reinforce our commitment to expanding education and training opportunities for VR clients. Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) support educational advancement and career-based skill upgrades that address individual consumer skill gaps as we work to prepare them for career employment.

Virginia VR works in close collaboration with one-stop centers and other state/local agencies to leverage community-based support for education, training and employment that benefits our consumers.

Through the Pathways grant, DARS has developed opportunities for participants to engage in IT skill development.

- The virtual WWRC IT Bootcamp had its inaugural class this fall. This 11-week class is a partnership with Pathways, WWRC and Adult Education. It provides virtual training in CompTIA Fundamentals.
- Some candidates require additional supports. Pathways has partnered with adult education to assist individuals that need foundational support training. Bridge work addresses digital literacy, customer service and trade related academics.

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- Pathways has also partnered with Maxx Potential (employer in the Richmond area) to provide five-day career labs exploring the IT career field to include hands-on activities within team environments.

Pathways has developed a group, Work Wi\$, to provide opportunities for participants recently employed to meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in a group setting to discuss issues on the job. This has shown promise and provides opportunities for participants to work through challenges they may be facing.

Further expansion of the Pathways DIF grant has provided opportunities for consumers to engage in industry specific skill upgrade, rapid and intensive job stabilization as well as continuing to educate the VR workforce (Counselors, Job Placement and Employment Service Specialists) in business development, targeted outreach and how to leverage pathways to ensure consumers have 21st century skills to meet employer demand.

At Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) a new training program, Building Trades, was started in September 2023. In addition, the following credentials were implemented within the Building Trades program: OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and Fundamentals of Construction.

In April 2023, a new program, the Workplace Readiness Program (WRP) was implemented to meet the needs of employers. WRP is designed to introduce workplace readiness behaviors to assist consumers with transitioning into employment or further education/training opportunities. Consumers receive differentiated instruction in thirteen workplace readiness behaviors which consumers can apply to simulated workplace environments through pre-employment skills labs. Also, workplace readiness behaviors are supported by ancillary staff such as Occupational Therapy, Behavior Support Services, Communication Services, Residential Services and Recreational Therapy.

Goal 1.2: Ensuring that VR consumers have the necessary credentials to compete for jobs in Virginia's new economy.

DRS continues to emphasize measurable skill gains (MSG PY22 statewide 77.6%) and credential attainment (PY 2022 32.3%) to reinforce our commitment to expanding education and training opportunities for VR clients. Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) support educational advancement and career-based skill upgrades that address individual consumer skill gaps as we work to prepare them for career employment. (also stated in Goal 1.1)

Further expansion of the Pathways DIF grant has provided opportunities for consumers to engage in industry specific skill upgrade, rapid and intensive job stabilization as well as continuing to educate the VR workforce (Counselors, Job Placement and Employment Service Specialists) in business development, targeted outreach and how to leverage pathways to ensure consumers have 21st century skills to meet employer demand. (also stated in Goal 1.1)

VR counselors and vocational evaluators have been trained on the current and future labor market, the availability of competitively waged jobs and the skills needed to obtain those jobs as well as industry-recognized credentials. This information is provided during Guidance and Counseling with consumers and their families as applicable.

DARS piloted and began implementation of iGREET, a comprehensive training program for all job placement counselors created through the Institute for Community Inclusion that focuses on the dual customer approach of business engagement. This training has been augmented with specific DARS services available to businesses and DARS internal processes to increase opportunities to engage with employers on behalf of DARS participants.

At WWRC, in every Vocational Training program, a WIOA recognized credential has been established. By offering recognized credentials, WWRC ensures that clients have a marketable and transferable credential that is recognized by employers in their chosen field of employment. Thus, increasing their employability, skills, and opportunity for advancement.

Goal 1.3: Enhanced use of labor market and occupational information by VR staff and VR consumers for career planning and Employment Plan development.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors utilize labor market information through the guidance and counseling process in the development of each IPE. This information is shared with consumers/families during plan development. As educational and employment plans are developed, areas with skill gaps are identified and addressed through this process. In addition, WWRC regularly reviews their credentialed programs to ensure they align with the needs of the labor market and DARS' clients. Programs have been added and removed to address changes in occupational demand.

Priority 2: Discovering new opportunities that expand employment options for our VR consumers and that are more effective in meeting our Commonwealth's workforce demands.

Goal 2.1: Working collaboratively with business and workforce development partners to identify the hiring needs of employers and matching those needs with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our VR consumers.

DARS VR maintains a regularly scheduled staffing presence in all comprehensive one-stop centers across the Commonwealth and serves as a single point of contact for consumers with identified disabilities.

DARS VR has full office operations in several one-stop centers, statewide, and works collaboratively with center partners to share employer information across systems. VR Counselors utilize this information in guidance and counseling with consumers through the VR process.

DARS VR has an elected seat on each Workforce Development Board across the Commonwealth and maintains an active voice on behalf of VR services and people with disabilities.

Partnerships with employers continued by providing Windmills Training. This past year 52 trainings were offered on Windmills' disability awareness training, impacting 1,751 human resource professionals and/or employers. Additionally, DARS applied to be a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) trainer so that when offering these trainings to HR professionals, they are able to receive continuing education credits to maintain their professional credentials.

A new training program, Building Trades, began in September 2023 at WWRC. In addition, in April 2023, a new program, the Workplace Readiness Program (WRP) was implemented to meet the needs of employers. The Workplace Readiness Program is designed to introduce workplace readiness behaviors to consumers to assist with transitioning into employment or further education/training opportunities. Consumers receive differentiated instruction in thirteen (13) workplace readiness behaviors which consumers can apply to simulated workplace environments through pre-employment skills labs. Also, workplace readiness behaviors are supported by ancillary staff such as Occupational Therapy, Behavior Support Services, Communication Services, Residential Services and Recreational Therapy.

Priority 3: Partnering with the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, state and local agencies, Supported Employment providers, and other entities in the integration of services for people with disabilities leading to competitive, integrated employment.

Goal 3.1: To identify and implement effective means to ensure seamless service delivery and supports among the partners, to include one-stop centers.

DARS VR has full office operations in several one-stop centers, statewide and works collaboratively with center partners to share employer information across systems. VR counselors utilize this information in guidance and counseling with consumers throughout the VR process.

DARS VR maintains a regularly scheduled staffing presence in all comprehensive one-stop centers across the Commonwealth and serves as a single point of contact for consumers with identified disabilities.

DRS offices work collaboratively with WWRC in the referral and admissions process to technical education provided in this supported setting. Vocational rehabilitation counselors are part of discharge planning and work with WWRC to find and support employment post-graduation.

DRS offices build and sustain working relationships with Employment Service Organization (ESO) providers for job coaching and placement related services.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides state funds to ESOs to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community-based employment options for persons with the most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services will be available to Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs as appropriated by the Virginia General Assembly.

DRS conducts district wide meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities. These sessions address increasing supported employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC provides training and technical assistance to Employment Service Organizations related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an emphasis in Customized Employment as well as implementing a fidelity scale for Customized Employment services.

DRS continues to have a collaborative relationship with ESOs through the ESO provider network and the Employment Services Organizations' Steering Committee (ESOSC). Through the ESOSC we receive stakeholder input from ESOs that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to community rehabilitation programs and the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services state funds, as well as other services that impact providers, such as Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services. This fosters close working relationships between agency staff and ESOs.

DRS continues to utilize the Employment Services Organization Outcome Report to assist ESOs, VR counselors, and VR consumers in ensuring appropriate service provision. The outcome report is reviewed annually with ESOs to provide information and answer questions about service provision.

Goal 3.2: Offering access and clear pathways to good jobs in the community with family sustaining wages.

Virginia VR has steadily increased wages at placement to support living wage standards for consumers. Our internal standards/goals exceed state minimum wage and have included year over year increases since 2021. The current state wage goal/requirement for 2024 is \$15.00/hour with Northern Virginia at \$17.50/hour.

The Pathways Program provides a specialized focus on promoting and supporting clients in career fields where they can grow professionally. Examples of some positive outcomes from this program include:

- Four individuals have entered into the registered apprenticeship program for Peer Recovery Specialists. This position is for individuals with learned experiences to mentor others in their recovery process.
- Assisting individuals with work experiences. Five individuals participated in paid work experiences. (This number does not include all VR clients who participated in paid work experiences.) This provides candidates with 8 to 12 weeks (up to 29 hours a week) of paid work experiences in their field. Three of these candidates are currently employed.
- Increased knowledge of VR program field staff of Pathways opportunities, the importance of career paths, and resources to help support clients.

In 2022 DARS was one of 14 states awarded a discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, to develop and implement the Real Pay for Real Jobs, Education and Outreach, Partnership Development, Provisions of Individualized Services, and Capacity Building (RPRJ EPIC) Project. Nationally known as the Disability Innovation Fund Program - Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE), the aim of the RPRJ EPIC Project is to help individuals with disabilities currently engaged in subminimum wage employment transition to competitive integrated employment and to assist youth with disabilities at risk of entering subminimum wage employment when they transition from school to the workforce, engage in employment in the general workforce.

The RPRJ EPIC project will build capacity at a local level to improve and expand services to address the obstacles to employment faced by individuals with disabilities. Transitioning from and preventing entrance into subminimum wage employment for project participants will be achieved by building local stakeholder capacity to provide improved services leading to competitive integrated employment outcomes. Activities will include 1) building partnerships in local communities including with businesses/employers, 2) increasing current 14(c) employers' capacity to provide evidenced-based services that lead to competitive integrated employment, 3) educating individuals with disabilities and their families about the benefits of employment, including building a family and peer mentor network and 4) engaging local agencies to secure wrap-around services.

The goal of the project is to develop sustainable services and supports to allow individuals with disabilities the opportunity to engage in employment in the general workforce that matches their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and provides compensation at customary wages for the positions.

Primary Project Objectives:

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1. Assist individuals currently compensated below minimum wage transition to competitive integrated employment.
 2. "Close the front door" for youth at risk of entering subminimum wage employment.
 3. Support employers who hold 14(c) certificates to transition to a competitive integrated employment model.

Goal 3.3: Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for unserved and underserved populations, to include veterans and individuals with sensory disabilities, mental illness, and developmental disabilities.

Through the Pathways DIF grant, vocational rehabilitation counselors and job placement counselors received intensive, data driven training on current unserved and underserved populations across the Commonwealth. Through this process local strategies were developed to increase targeted outreach. This process will expand through 2024-2027.

The Pathways grant has created a Hispanic/Latinx advisory board to better inform the agency of strategies needed to provide relevant services to this community.

Support has been provided from the Pathways grant to assist a VR counselor who will spearhead a Spanish Speaking job club.

Strategic planning processes occurred in each District. Targeted outreach plans were developed in late 2022-2023. These plans are still underway.

DARS has selected and trained key VR staff in key concepts to implement Customized Employment approaches to DARS clients exiting institutions, sheltered workshops, high schools, and adults for whom traditional Supported Employment services have not yielded successful outcomes. DARS in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) continues to work to build the provider capacity for Customized Employment. Virginia has struggled to build capacity for this service. As a result, DARS has begun engaging providers to better understand the challenges that they have experienced in adopting this service model. The agency has been exploring provider experiences through training, mentoring, service provision, staffing, and administrative aspects of the model. The information and data gathered from each of the providers will then be compiled to identify common themes and means to capacity building while retaining fidelity to the model.

The DBHDS' Office of Substance Use Disorders has provided DARS with fiscal and personnel resources to support the co-location of VR counselors in the Community Services Boards (CSBs) since 1988. The resources contributed by DBHDS allow DARS to have dedicated specialty counselors to provide VR services to individuals that experience substance use disorders that also receive treatment services through the CSB service system. The program expanded in the middle of SFY 2000 from three counselors to nineteen counselors serving 18 of the forty CSBs. DARS also provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, most

of whom are also served by CSBs. In addition, DARS' staff serve on Virginia's Employment First Advisory Group and work closely with DBHDS on various work groups and initiatives that focus on recovery and the integration of work into the mental health service system. Consultants from both the Office of Substance Use Disorders and the Office of Behavioral Health collaborate with DARS in conducting annual meetings to provide program updates, provide in-service training opportunities, and regularly share information to promote a common understanding of the strategies and practices to serve individuals with substance abuse and/or serious mental illness. DARS has two employees who specialize in intellectual and developmental disabilities to provide technical assistance, guidance, and direction to VR counselors in serving this population.

In 2022, The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) selected Virginia as one of seven state participants for the Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE) initiative. The goal of ASPIRE is to support and expand competitive integrated employment for people with mental health conditions, through use of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment. IPS is a model of supported employment for people with Serious Mental Illness (SMI). ASPIRE helps align state policy and funding to better promote competitive integrated employment for people with SMI that may include co-occurring Substance Use Disorders (SUD). The technical assistance cycle runs from January 2023 through September 2024. In FFY 2023 one new program was created in far southwest Virginia. In FFY 2024, we anticipate adding one to two additional IPS programs. New IPS programs receive training and technical assistance from the DRS IPS specialist and Trainer as well as national subject matter experts through the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. IPS teams learn together to implement the eight principles of IPS, leading to systemic change in how mental health services are delivered. Technical assistance and training will be individualized for each IPS Team based upon an IPS Readiness Checklist. DARS is working closely with DBHDS to collaborate on this program as well as to establish a value-based rate structure to incentivize outcomes for job seekers.

Priority 4: Ensuring accountability and effective performance management.

Goal 4.1: Effectively and efficiently utilize personnel and fiscal resources to optimize agency performance and the availability of services for VR consumers.

DARS/DRS will continue to utilize a quality assurance (QA) and accountability system that includes ongoing quarterly QA case reviews, consumer satisfaction assessments, performance evaluations and performance analysis to address effective consumer services and use of fiscal resources to ensure quality employment outcomes for our consumers.

Goal 4.2: Providing services that result in meaningful and measurable outcomes through objective assessment of performance and ongoing innovation and process improvement.

DRS has improved the data literacy of field leadership to enhance effectiveness in providing quality outcome driven services. A primary focus of this intervention is replication of innovative and successful service delivery methods which have improved financial and personnel resource allocation across the state.

Priority 5: Enhancing services to students and youth with disabilities.

Goal 5.1: Identify best practices, create strategies, and partner with other agencies to better serve students and youth with disabilities to ensure a pathway and appropriate services to meet their employment goals.

DARS has been diligently working to better serve students and youth with disabilities through the growth and improvement of current services and the expansion of new opportunities. This includes an internal review of administrative functions including staffing with the outcome of creating dedicated Transition Counselors (Student & Youth Counselor) to leverage expertise and focus on building/sustaining relationships with school districts, families and local communities. Continued and sustained work with ESOs is resulting in increased ESO vendor capacity to provide Pre-ETS services to local school districts. Work in this area will continue.

DARS continues to offer career cafes focusing on specific sectors and utilizing industry experts to inform students of potential career opportunities in high demand occupations. Students, teachers, and vocational rehabilitation counselors are invited to attend. These monthly sessions are recorded and archived on the DARS website.

At the request of the RSA Coordinator for Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC), DARS created a webinar on how work impacts SSI benefits and work incentives that apply to transition-aged youth. The webinar was recorded and will be used as part of the resources PEATC uses going forward to educate parents on the impact of work on benefits, disposable income, and work incentives. This will increase transition age youth and their parents' knowledge of SSA work incentives and encourage earlier paid work experiences and the utilization of the Student Earned Income Exclusion.

DARS sponsored additional training for work incentive specialists through Cornell on youth work incentives to increase vendor understanding of this population and specific work incentives related to youth.

The PERT Program is a highly effective school-to-work transition initiative supported by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and administered through DARS at WWRC. It has ten service line options and specialized programs: PERT comprehensive, situational exploration, SOL intake, Transition Academy, Community PERT, Independent Living Exploration Training, Career Day, Career Seminars, Virtual PERT, and Work Credential Week.

DARS continued to support transition age youth in on-the-job training experiences and with the numerous Project SEARCH sites across the State. DARS in collaboration with VDOE has established two additional Project SEARCH programs on Military Bases, Naval Air Station Oceana, and Fort Gregg-Adams. Project SEARCH is a transition program for students with most significant disabilities. It is business led with a host business that offers hands-on training with the main goal of competitive integrated employment.

The Cooperative Agreement between DARS and the Department of Education was executed on February 25, 2017. Under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, it is to be reviewed annually by both Agencies and remains in effect until altered by amendment or terminated by either Agency with no less than 30 days notice in writing. This Agreement may also be amended by mutual consent of both Departments, provided that any changes are agreed to in writing at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change. A focus of the agreement is to provide collaborative training opportunities between school personnel and DARS Counselors to increase collaborative transition services which lead to improved outcomes for students with disabilities. Another focus of the agreement is the importance of sharing data between agencies.

Additionally, DARS works collaboratively with local education agencies to develop cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreements outline:

- Coordination and Collaboration – This discusses who is the lead agency for specific activities such as informing students of services available through DARS and determining eligibility for DRS services.
- Consultation and Technical Assistance – This section describes the consultation and technical assistance DARS provides to local school divisions to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities (e.g., attending IEP meetings, person centered planning meetings, transition planning meetings, career fairs, transition fairs, etc.)
- Pre-ETS & VR Transition Services – These sections describe each of the services DARS provides in the continuum of transition services.
- Interagency Planning between VR and School Division Ensures students/families are informed about DARS and school responsibilities in referring/obtaining documentation for DARS services.
- Interagency Planning between VR, WWRC, and School Divisions focused on PERT planning and recruitment activities. Discusses the roles of LEA coordinators, DARS VRCs and WWRC admissions team.
- Cross-Training Opportunities – Outlines how staff members of each agency will provide regular training to the other agencies regarding services provided (i.e., in-service trainings at staff meetings).
- Financial Responsibilities – Outlines the financial responsibilities of each agency regarding service provision.
- Dispute Resolution - Outlines the process to resolve disputes related to financial responsibility of each agency.

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- Youth and Subminimum Wage Employment – Affirms that neither agency will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability receives or is compensated at subminimum wage. Furthermore, it outlines the documentation requirements of each agency to comply with the requirements set forth in 34 CFR § 397.10.

The DARS' Transition and Education Coordinator has also partnered with school division staff to plan summer program offerings. The offerings are based on students' needs and available resources in the local communities. Throughout the Commonwealth, the Department has had numerous summer programs provided by DARS' counselors and ESOs. Summer opportunities have included work-based learning experiences, both paid and unpaid, that may last for up to eight weeks. Other programs offered include the remaining four Pre-ETS standards. ESOs have developed programs lasting anywhere from one week to eight weeks of classroom-based instruction for groups of students as well as workplace experiences in areas where DARS may not have the capacity to provide those services. Pre-ETS summer offerings were not offered "in-person" during the summer of 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. DARS' staff provided Pre-ETS' services virtually or telephonically to students during this time to ensure students' safety while keeping them linked to Pre-ETS. During the summer of 2021, DARS offered in-person services to students due to the decline of COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth. Over 300 students were able to participate in an onsite work experience.

When an IEP meeting invitation is received from a school division, DARS' staff responds to the invitation and participates in the meeting by attending in person, virtually, by phone, or provides information that can be shared with students, staff, and parents/guardians (e.g., DARS' contact and program information). DARS' staff coordinate in the development of the IEP with the teacher, student and parent prior to the IEP Meeting for open cases, general information about Pre-ETS and VR Services can be provided during the IEP meeting for potential new cases as well as by establishing open lines of communication with school staff and providing information on how DARS' counselors can work with school staff to provide activities related to individual transition goals and activities for post-secondary education /training, employment, and independent living. DARS' staff coordinate the need for Pre-ETS by:

- Communicating with school staff and providing information about Pre-ETS services and how they relate to transition goals and activities in students' IEPs;
- Participating in school division events;
- Participating as members of school division committees such as Transition Councils;
- Presenting on Pre-ETS services to staff; and
- Developing good working relationships with school division administrators.

DARS' staff, in conjunction with the IEP case manager, review the Transition Section of the IEP with the student, parent, and teacher during meetings at the school. Reviewing the goals on the IEP assists the Pre-ETS Counselor with identifying what services the school is

providing to help the individual meet their transition goals. This information is utilized to help the team plan what services DARS could provide to assist the student achieve their transition goals. It is a best practice to make sure that input from the DARS' team members input is shared with the IEP teams prior to the school-based IEP meetings so that it can be used in developing ongoing IEP transition goals.

DARS' staff also identifies, and coordinates needed Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. DARS' counselors serving potentially eligible (PE) students collaborate with the student, the student's school, their family and, as applicable, other relevant team members to identify the topics and objectives team members have or will address with the student. The DARS' counselor then supports the student with receiving services to address the remaining topics. This promotes a truly collaborative approach to Pre-ETS and ensures DARS does not duplicate services. In addition, DARS' staff coordinates the need for Pre-ETS by communicating with school staff, providing information about Pre-ETS services and how they relate to transition goals and activities in the IEP, participating in school division events, being active members of school division committees such as Transition Councils, presenting about Pre-ETS to school division staff, and developing good working relationships with school division administrators.

DARS continues to be a stakeholder in the review of data that VDOE collects to report to the Office on Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support and accomplish respective post-school and employment outcomes required by the federal government and to provide meaningful data collection by each agency.

Additional DARS and VDOE collaborative activities include co-chairing statewide interagency collaborative groups. Representatives from DARS, VDOE, and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) plan statewide trainings to discuss transition and vocational services and initiatives available to students with disabilities and federal and state regulations related to transition services. This activity provides a forum for transition practitioners and other interested stakeholders from school divisions, adult agencies, and community partners to engage in professional development activities, networking opportunities, and collaborative efforts that enhance the implementation of quality transition services for secondary school students with disabilities. The Community of Practice works to stay abreast of current transition information, to identify gaps in resources, and avoid duplication of transition services.

DARS has expanded the number of Start on Success Programs in Virginia. There are currently eight programs and Virginia is expected to have nine programs in the 2023-2024 school year. DARS counselors work closely with all projects and DARS provides for wage reimbursement for the first three years of each project.

Additionally, for many years the State Coordinator for the Deaf has served as a member of the Virginia Network of Consultants: Professionals Working with Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOC). This group was created by the Virginia Department of Education, in

collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. While the members provide consultation to Virginia's school divisions to promote/enhance education services, DARS' role is to foster collaboration and exchange information related to transition services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Department's Deaf Services Program Staff also served as members of the planning team for Opening Doors - Unlocking Potential, which is Virginia's premier professional development in deaf and hard of hearing education. The Department's Deaf Services Program is an exhibitor and provides workshops at this annual event, as well as webinars sponsored through the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. With the Technical Assistance Center and the Virginia School for the Deaf, the Department's Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness is part of the statewide team coordinating outreach activities with Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing across the Commonwealth to connect them with the regional Rehabilitation Counselors serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This statewide team has also partnered with the state parent organization and developed virtual online activities for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The Department's Transition and Education Coordinator and expert field staff provide training to staff through in-person activities and virtual meetings. Training is provided to new counselors as part of the New Counselors Skills Training. This training provides information on how to provide Pre-ETS/Transition services to support a career pathways approach and how to evaluate and process VR training cases to ensure that employment goals meet the employment needs of our communities. Virtual meetings are used to streamline processes and improve communication with field staff involved with serving transition-age youth. The monthly meetings offer a time saving alternative to the standard face-to-face training approach while simultaneously saving agency resources. Webinar topics are developed based on staff input, leadership recommendations, and developing issues.

For the past several years, the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the National Deaf Center (NDC) "Engage for Change/state." This collaboration focuses on critical issues in deaf education that address positive student outcomes, graduation and transition to post-secondary education and training. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, annual in-person summits were held by invitation only and included state leaders from deaf education and vocational rehabilitation agencies. The Department's State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (SCD) and the Department of Education Specialist of Deaf and Hard of Hearing represented the state at the annual summit and convened local stakeholder meetings to review gaps in programs and services. The Department has also added to this team the Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness. NDC is a national program funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Their focus is to build capacity in states and support the exchange of information and strategies for improving educational programs, services and outcomes for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Since the creation of this postsecondary grant in 1996, the Department has been an active participant in roundtable discussions of state teams hosted by the grant on a regional and national level. Currently, the Department serves as a member of the Summer Program Workgroup modeling

Virginia's summer youth program. The Department's Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness serves on the Virtual Career Exploration and Work Based Learning workgroups. The Department has also convened, over the past several years, a one-day statewide summer youth event "Opening Doors to Life Beyond High School" for deaf and hard of hearing students, which was jointly held at the annual Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Professional Development Institute.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program successfully held a three-day summer program for seven students who are deaf and hard of hearing in 2021 at WWRC. While this was the third annual event, it was held for the first time on the WWRC campus, with the residential support of the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program Services. All DARS staff used American Sign Language and interpreters were provided for students who were not fluent signers; therefore, making the entire program a total immersion experience for all students. Sessions incorporated all five Pre-ETS core services with a focus of "Deaf at Work." The Department's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf are part of the team in developing this program and the goal was to bring in Deaf Mentors (former consumers) to share stories about their journeys as they "mapped their future." This program has continued with new and returning students. In 2022, there were five deaf students and in 2023 there were 11 deaf and hard of hearing students. The returning students were given leadership roles in several sessions. Additionally, the Program Director from the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing became a part of the planning team and instructor in 2022. Based on students' evaluations, plans for 2024 will expand the program to four days.

2. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

Employment Rate, Median Earnings, Measurable Skills Gain, and Credential Attainment

DARS monitors their progress towards the WIOA accountability indicators monthly. Each month a scorecard is distributed to the DARS vocational services director, and district leadership so that outcomes at the state, district, office, and counselor level can be assessed. The monthly report is conditionally formatted so that progress towards the measures can be easily determined and is color coded to provide information quickly.

DARS adds the measures achieved by the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) for the final submission to RSA for the following measures: employment rate at 2nd quarter post exit, employment rate 4th quarter post exit, median earnings at 2nd quarter post exit, credential attainment and measurable skills gains.

The negotiated performance measures below were agreed upon in 2022.

Indicator	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	53.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	50.0%	52.0%
Median Earnings (second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,600	\$3,800
Credential Attainment Rate	43.5%	45%
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%	89.1%

Performance results for PY 22 are below:

Indicator	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Results (DARS and DBVI)
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	58.1%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	50.0%	55.7%
Median Earnings (second Quarter After Exit)	\$3600	\$4,123
Credential Attainment Rate	43.5%	61.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%	87.7%

Program year (PY) 2022 results exceeded all negotiated levels with the exception of measurable skill gains (MSG). Virginia VR has shown consistent improvement in all performance indicators areas since PY 20 with the exception of measurable skills gains (MSG) which fell from 92.3% in PY 2021 to 87.7% in PY 2022. It should be noted that Virginia still ranks amongst the top states for MSGs. Also, it is important to recognize that the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) did not assess MSG in PY 2022.

DARS will continue our partnership with DBVI to extend the trajectory of these improved outcomes. It is assumed that the decrease in performance with MSG could be related to data input. This can be addressed through additional education of staff and a continued emphasis on the importance of data tracking.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

DARS has partnered with our Core Partners and the Virginia's Workforce Development Board to establish a baseline for each of the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. The Commonwealth of Virginia selected Retention with the Same Employer and Employer Penetration Rate as the pilot measures to assess the Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The data collection efforts on employer services, which included

activities supported by WIOA-funded programs and other non-WIOA funded workforce programs, shows that in PY 2022 there was a 64.5% retention rate for DARS.,

DARS monitors our progress towards attainment of these goals with monthly reports on the number and types of businesses served at the district, state, and office level. These reports are reviewed by our VR director and leadership team.

3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).

The DARS workforce programs unit has continued to promote and deliver Windmills training to employers and has added additional trainers to allow for on demand in person trainings upon request. The DARS Business Services team and select placement counselors, vocational evaluators and assistive technology staff presented 52 Windmills trainings to over 1751 individuals with state and federal agencies, businesses, and community partners through the end of September 2023. The team added a module this year, "Taking Emotions out of Emotional Disabilities," which explores the effects of employers' reactions to emotional disabilities and how employers can offer reasonable accommodations to create an emotionally neutral environment.

DARS provided over 4,400 services to employers which included assistance with Work Opportunity Tax Credits, recruitment, consultation, labor market information, assessments, subsidized on the job training and training in employment issues and pre-employment training.

The Pathways to Careers grant has completed year two of funding and increased to 15 offices and worked with over 200 clients. DARS has partnered with the Department of Labor's Division of Registered Apprenticeship and Cyber Civilian to develop a peer recovery specialist registered apprenticeship and are beginning to assist clients enter into this career. The Pathways grant is working on the development of a Spanish language job club and has targeted the grant's advisory workgroup to Hispanic participants to address this underserved population and increase our agency's effectiveness in serving this community.

E) SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:

- (A) ☒ VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.
- (B) ☐ VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

Each year, DARS supplements its Title VI funding for supported employment with Title I funding. This strategy allows DARS to provide Supported Employment services to all clients who require that service to become successfully employed. During FFY 2023, 4,389 individuals received services through DARS Supported Employment programs via Title I case service funds (\$13,863,426.56). This includes Job Coach Training Services (JCTS).

The Employment Services and Special Programs team provides training and technical assistance to all DRS field offices. Technical Assistance for Customized Employment and Supported Employment is offered to individual counselors and in a group to field offices.

DARS will continue to reserve and expend a minimum of 50 percent of its Title VI funds on youth with the most significant disabilities. DARS' policies will allow for the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed four years and DARS will continue to utilize other funds (non-Title VI) for supported employment services for youth. These funds are utilized once the Title VI funds are exhausted. However, in the past four years, DARS has expended 100% of these funds on youth with the most significant disabilities. DARS expects to continue to expend 100 percent of Title VI funds on youth with the most significant disabilities.

DARS will continue to improve the quality of supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities through training and technical assistance. DARS will continue its efforts to deliver quality supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities by: (a) providing ongoing training and technical assistance to VR staff and Employment Services Organizations on long-term follow along options; (b) conducting, on a regular basis, reviews of cases in long term follow along to ensure that appropriate quality services are being provided along with effective and efficient use of funds; and (c) developing guidance for, and training, counselors to use the annual Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report as an effective tool to assist clients in making Employment Services Organization choices.

The Commonwealth requires that each of Virginia's Employment Services Organizations approved to provide employment services be nationally accredited through CARF International (CARF). CARF accreditation provides a host of benefits to the Commonwealth as a state-funding source, as well as to DARS consumers, and taxpayers. In addition to assuring accountability and consistent quality levels, national accreditation allows DARS to focus on program expansion, improvement, and accountability. DARS currently purchases services through 62 Employment Services Organizations throughout the state. During FFY

2023, these organizations provided Supported Employment services to 4,389 individuals, including youth with the most significant disabilities. During FFY 2022, 5,380 individuals received services through DARS Supported Employment Program. The Department projects that it will serve this number of individuals in FFY 2024 and FFY 2025. The Employment Services Organizations provide both time-limited and extended services, which commence at the time of job placement. Supported employment services include extended services, follow-along services, individual, and group model supported employment services.

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE I OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 defines Supported Employment as competitive work in integrated settings for individuals with severe disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for individuals for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or is intermittent because of a severe disability, and who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need ongoing support services to perform such work. Supported employment services are based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual as specified in the individualized plan for employment (IPE). Supported employment services are provided by DARS for a period of not more than 24 months, unless there are special circumstances and the eligible individual, and the vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor jointly agree that an extension of time is necessary for the individual to achieve the employment outcome identified in their IPE. In FFY 2022, 368 youth and in FFY 2023, 336 youth with most significant disabilities received services through supported employment programs funded by Title VI utilizing 100% of the Title VI funds allocated to the Department.

Transition to extended services from DARS supported time-limited services is accomplished after the consumer reaches stability in employment. During the 90 days before anticipated case closure, the counselor shall ensure stability based on the following:

- 1) funding for extended services has been secured; 2) job coaching and related interventions have decreased to a level necessary to maintain the client in employment and intervention has reached a plateau or leveled out; 3) client is emotionally or behaviorally stable; 4) client performs expected job duties; 5) supervisor reports satisfaction with client job performance; 6) client is satisfied with the job and work environment; 7) necessary modifications and accommodations have been made at the worksite; 8) client has reliable transportation to and from work; and 9) client is compensated at or above minimum wage but not less than the customary wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by employees without disabilities. Stability for those placed in competitive integrated group supported employment also includes

the client completing a 60-day period of placement and training in which intervention is directed at training to maintain production rather than behavioral issues. After that time, the funding is transferred from the basic federal VR grant to the state-sponsored long-term follow along funding. Coordination with the service provider, the client's counselor, and the long-term support occurs to ensure that there is both timely and accountable transition to extended services.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 363.4(A) AND 34 CFR 361.5(C)(19)(V).

DARS maintains relationships with private non-profit, private for profit and Centers for Independent Living VR services providers.

DARS continues its collaborative relationship with the more than 59 ESOs across Virginia that provide supported employment and customized employment services to DARS' consumers. The Commonwealth requires ESOs to obtain specific CARF (the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) International accreditation standards in order to ensure quality in employment services for our consumers.

DARS receives and utilizes stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services (LTESS) state funds, as well as other services that impact providers and fosters close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations. Additionally, DARS collaborates with ESOs through regional provider forums and statewide leadership forums.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides state funds to ESOs to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community-based employment options for persons with the most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services was made available by the Virginia General Assembly to Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs.

DRS conducts district wide meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities. These sessions address increasing supported employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC provides training and technical assistance to ESOs related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment as well as implementing a fidelity scale for CE services.

DARS implements an annual Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report to provide information to VR counselors and their consumers on the performance of each Employment Services Organization to inform decisions regarding service provider selection.

DARS has also established cooperative agreements with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) around services for DARS VR clients. The agreements are periodically reviewed, updated, and renewed as needed.

(F) ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

(1) ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR— FFY 2025

(A) *VR Program*; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
MSD*	18,481	16,663	\$22,391,207.00	1,848
SD**	3,938	3,150	\$1,281,066.00	788
NSD***	243	214	\$94,947.00	29
Total	22,662	19,997	\$23,767,220.00	2,665

(B) *Supported Employment Program*.

Priority Category	No. of Individuals	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services	Costs of Services using	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving

(if applicable)	Eligible for Services	under Supported Employment Program	Title I and Title VI Funds	Services (if applicable)
MSD*	5,502	5,502	\$14,453,636.10	n/a

* MSD = Most Significant Disability

** SD = Significant Disability

*** NSD = All Other Eligible Individuals

(G) Order of Selection.

[check box] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

☒ The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

1. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. The justification for the order;

An Order of Selection is required under Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, if a vocational rehabilitation agency determines that it is unable to provide services to all eligible individuals who apply for services. As of September 30, 2023, all categories remain open and DARS does not have clients on the Wait List for services under an Order of Selection. Notwithstanding, DARS maintains priority categories, cognizant of the fact that DARS' funding for its vocational rehabilitation services could change making DARS unable to provide services to all eligible individuals.

B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

The established priority categories are as follows:

Priority Category I: An individual with a most significant disability

Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability

Priority III: All other individuals determined eligible for the VR program

Definitions and Terminology:

An individual with a significant disability means an individual with a disability:

Who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;

Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disabilities, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

An individual with a most significant disability is an individual with a significant disability that seriously limits three or more functional capacities.

Extended Period of Time: Needing services for a duration of six months or more.

Multiple Services: Two or more services needed to achieve a successful rehabilitation.

C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

The following provides information on the service and outcome goals for individuals in the three Priority Categories: (1) Most Significantly Disabled; (2) Significantly Disabled; and (3) all other Eligible Individuals. Please note that the provided numbers for all categories are estimates and are difficult to predict accurately with the opening and closing of priority categories.

Priority Category 1: In FFY 2024, 17,190 individuals will be served; 15,471 will exit with employment after receiving services; 1,719 individuals who will exit without employment

after receiving services. In FFY 2025, 17,017 individuals will be served; 15,315 will exit with employment after receiving services; 1,702 individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services. Cost of services: FFY 2024 \$20,827,058.00; FFY 2025 \$20,617,454.

Priority Category 2: In FFY 2024, 3,440 individuals will be served; 2,752 will exit with employment after receiving services; 688 individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services. In FFY 2025, 3,968 individuals will be served; 3,174 will exit with employment after receiving services; 794 individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services. Cost of services: FFY 2024 \$1,119,062; FFY 2025 \$1,290,825.

Priority Category 3: In FFY 2024, 146 individuals will be served; 128 will exit with employment after receiving services; 18 individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services. In FFY 2025, 189 individuals will be served; 166 will exit with employment after receiving services; 23 individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services. Cost of services: FFY 2024 \$57,046; FFY 2025 \$73,848.

Depending upon agency resources, the categories are closed for services in order beginning with Priority Category III, then II and, finally, Priority Category I. This policy does not affect consumers who began to receive services under an Individualized Plan for Employment prior to the implementation date of order of selection.

After a consumer is found eligible for VR services, an Order of Selection determination is completed. Additional evaluations or assessments to make the eligibility determination may be provided. The VR counselor, in collaboration with the consumer, determines the consumer's Priority Category by evaluating the consumer's serious functional limitations, anticipated services needed and the duration of those services.

When funding requires that clients be placed on a waitlist, all clients must be officially notified of their individual Order of Selection determination. All clients must be officially notified of their individual Order of Selection determination. Clients in closed categories are provided with referral services to the One-stop centers or other appropriate sources and are placed on the Wait List. After 12-months, consumers are contacted to determine if they wish to remain on the Wait List or have their case closed. If they do not notify their counselor that they wish to have their case closed, they remain on the Wait List. Consumers in closed categories may request a review of their priority category assignment by submitting evidence that their disability has become more severe. DARS does not anticipate anyone who applies and is determined eligible to be placed on the Order of Selection Wait List for both FFY 2024 and FFY 2025.

Currently, all categories remain open and DARS does not have any clients on the Wait List. Depending upon agency resources, the categories are closed for services in order beginning with Priority Category III, then II and, finally Priority Category I. This policy does not affect

consumers who began to receive services under an Individualized Plan for Employment prior to the implementation date of order of selection.

Projected timelines for opening categories

Priority Category 1: FFY 2024 0 days; FFY 2025 0 days. Priority Category 2: FFY 2024 0 days; FFY 2025 0 days. Priority Category 3: FFY 2024 0 days; FFY 2025 0 days.

2. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

[check box] Yes

[check box] No

(H) Waiver of Statewideness.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not applicable since DARS does not request a waiver.

(I) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—

- A. The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;
- B. The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
- C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Vocational Rehab Counselor - VRC	146	17 (Total 163)	179
Placement Counselor	21	5 (Total 26)	30
Vocational Evaluator	10	2 (Total 12)	14
Program Support	29	0	29
Other Service Staff	71	7 (Total 78)	78
Managers	36	0	36

- D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients: 1:117
- E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: 21,000

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

- A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Virginia Commonwealth University	Rehab Counseling	19	46
	Clinical Mental Health	58	
	Dual RC + MH	30	
George Washington University	Rehab Counseling	33	6

West VA University	Rehab Counseling	69	19
Norfolk State University	Rehab Counseling	No information	No information
Winston Salem State University	Rehab Counseling – RCD Program	No information	No information

B. The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The Division for Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is committed to a highly qualified and diverse talent pool that is reflective of the diversity of our communities and customers. To achieve this goal, DRS in partnership with DARS Human Resources has continued our recruitment plan that includes outreach to all surrounding University Rehabilitation programs and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), comprehensive internship programs as well as mentorship programs with particular emphasis on attracting and retaining candidates from minority backgrounds and those with disabilities. These efforts include targeted marketing to student groups representative of diverse backgrounds, direct work with University ADA and disability advocate personnel as well as continued leveraging of our Disability Innovation Grant – PATHWAYS. The opportunity ensures priority application screening for personnel from minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities in the hiring process. This opportunity continues to open doors for apprenticeship hiring for staff in our agency. Pathways affords collaboration and staff embedded in the State Department of Human Resource Management and the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry.

The comprehensive Personnel Plan and agency recruitment and selection policies assure that all newly recruited staff meet minimum state requirements. Information from the Comprehensive Personnel Plan is also used to refine job classifications, job descriptions, and performance standards. DARS Management conducts annual reviews of performance standards to ascertain whether the standards continue to meet requirements and needs and offer recommendations, as appropriate.

DARS cooperates with Virginia colleges, universities, and higher education institutions in other states to place student interns in VR counselor, vocational evaluator, physical/occupational therapy, audiology, nursing and other appropriate professional positions. Paid internships are provided to graduate students, when possible, along with unpaid practicum and internship placements. In 2022, three internships were initiated which resulted in two students securing full time VR counselor employment with the agency. The Department is committed to continuing formal and informal internship programs as a workforce planning tool in an effort to attract and retain qualified professionals.

C. Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Staff development is critical to providing quality services. From new counselors to seasoned staff, ensuring professional growth and up to date knowledge is necessary for the success of DARS' VR clients. To ensure new counselors have the knowledge and tools they need to succeed, New Counselor Skills Training (NCST) was redesigned in 2023. This training is required of all Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) staff and is offered to any other field staff who would benefit from attending.

A well-designed and quality training program is an essential part of the onboarding process with new employees, while aiding in staff retention. With creating a new and streamlined curriculum, new employees receive a more focused and strategic training that increases competency, confidence, and retention. Having an established training guide, managers and supervisors save time and ensure new staff are onboarded consistently and comprehensively across the Commonwealth. The training model is comprised of Foundational Learning (to be completed within the first 3 months of hire) followed by four strategically developed Units covering various topics of the VR Process from Application to Closure. Each Unit encompasses four sections; consisting of pre-work designed for completion prior to the in-person training, a 2 day in-person training, homework to promote application/practice and ending with a virtual check-in with the trainers to follow up on any concerns/issues that may have arisen. This re-designed training structure moves from four intensive days to six months of intensive training conducted in a variety of adult learning methods. Providing this unified robust training curriculum, new hires should receive a comprehensive streamlined training to enhance their learning within the state VR program.

DARS provides a comprehensive in-service training program for VR staff with the use of VR funds earmarked for training purposes. The training programs planned in a given year are identified from training needs assessments, information from the VR consumer satisfaction survey, and discussions with agency management and the State Rehabilitation Council. DARS utilizes the training funds for training activities to include, but not limited to, professional and leadership development, assistive technology, caseload management, job development and placement, and Pre-employment and transition services for youth with disabilities. Internal and external staff training opportunities are communicated to staff on a weekly basis. These trainings include nationally based opportunities as well as Virginia VR specific topics that focus on process improvement and quality assurance. Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credits are offered as appropriate. VR staff also acquire knowledge of

research activities with their involvement with the National Rehabilitation Association and are provided information and guidance around Virginia Rehabilitation Association membership.

3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—

A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

To comply with the qualified personnel requirement of the Rehabilitation Act DARS requires VR counselors to possess “a master's or doctoral degree in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, law, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, management, public administration, or another field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related field...” (34 C.F.R. § 361.18 (c)(1)(ii)(B).

A DARS' vocational rehabilitation counselor will be considered qualified personnel for the purposes of determining eligibility for the VR program. (34 CFR §361.42)

DARS operates a tiered structure for VR counselors' qualifications. This leveled approach seeks to address challenges in hiring and retaining qualified and effective VR counselors. VR Counselors 1 are required to hold a Master's Degree in a field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability or human services field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related field (including degrees listed in 34 C.F.R. § 361.18 (c)(1)(ii)(B). VR Counselors 2 hold a Master's Degree, as previously noted, and possess the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential. To recognize and reward the highly valued CRC credential, DARS will utilize an incentive plan, if feasible, to encourage staff to obtain and maintain their CRC credential.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

DARS continues to address the communication needs of consumers by having counselors who specialize in caseloads serving individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and has other employees who can communicate in sign language. There are nine “dedicated” Regional Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCDs) across the Commonwealth, which include several Rehabilitation Counselors who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. In addition, there is a statewide Transition Specialist for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, who also serves as the statewide consultant on Pre-ETS/Transition issues. WWRC also has sign language interpreters for clients and employees in need of these services. Sign language and foreign language interpreters and translators are also contracted as needed for employees and clients in need of these services. Counselors use other resources, including assistive technology, to communicate with consumers with individualized needs. All VR forms used by the public have been translated into Spanish and are posted on the Internet for public use. In addition, these forms may be translated into other languages based upon client need.

There are also videophones located in each Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCDs’) office, State Coordinator for the Deaf, Statewide Transition Specialist for the Deaf, and in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Unit at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC). This allows staff and consumers to access Video Relay Services and for consumers to call in “point to point” to discuss their services with counselors.

The agency is always reviewing evolving communication technology and continues to work with state and national community partners (Workforce Development Centers, Community Services Boards, the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Local Deaf Service Centers and CSAVR Deaf Professionals Network) to pilot software to enhance telecommunications and accommodation needs of staff via text and video services.

The agency continues to develop and implement plans to enhance outreach and services to individuals with disabilities from different ethnic backgrounds, including those with limited English proficiency. DARS has a number of regional and statewide resources available to address the unique service needs of this population, particularly as it relates to interpreting and translation services. In addition, DARS has several Spanish-speaking counselors.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is the state agency responsible for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004. The DARS and VDOE cooperative agreement outlines collaborative practices on respective policies,

eligibility criteria, information requirements, agency programs and services and the coordination of transition services.

DARS continues to be a stakeholder in the review of data that VDOE collects to report to the Office on Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support and accomplish respective post school and employment outcomes required by the federal government and to provide meaningful data collection by each agency.

Additional DARS and VDOE collaborative activities include co-chairing a statewide Community of Practice on Transition. Representatives from DARS, VDOE, local education agencies (LEAs), and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) conduct meetings and trainings across the Commonwealth to discuss transition and vocational services available to students with disabilities. This collaboration and flow of communication allows for improved partnerships, creative responses to identified needs, and recommendations for future efforts.

The State Coordinator for the Deaf serves as a member of the Virginia Network of Consultants: Professional Working with Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOC). This group was created by the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. While the members provide consultation to Virginia's school divisions to promote/enhance education services, DARS' role is to foster collaboration and exchange information related to transition services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness and a Regional Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing also served as a member of the planning team for Opening Doors - Unlocking Potential, which is Virginia's premier professional development in deaf and hard of hearing education. The Department's Deaf Services Program is an exhibitor and provides workshops at this annual event, as well as webinars sponsored through the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. With the Technical Assistance Center and the Virginia School for the Deaf, the Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness is part of the statewide team coordinating outreach activities with Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This statewide team has also partnered with the state parent organization and developed virtual online activities for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The Transition and Education Coordinator utilizes an interactive webinar series to streamline processes and improve communication to/from field staff involved with serving students with disabilities. The webinar series offers a time saving alternative to the standard face-to-face training approach while simultaneously saving agency resources. Webinar topics are developed based on staff input, leadership recommendations, and developing issues. Similar technology is also used for meetings with local office and school division staff. The DARS Transition and Education Coordinator and other staff facilitate meetings by using the Zoom Meeting platform. This enables teams to meet online and collaboratively discuss partnerships and programming.

For several years, the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the National Deaf Center (NDC) “Engage for Change/State.” This collaboration focuses on critical issues in deaf education that address positive student outcomes, graduation, and transition to post-secondary education and training. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, annual in-person summits were held, and participants included state leaders from deaf education and vocational rehabilitation agencies. The Department’s State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (SCD) and the Department of Education Specialist of Deaf and Hard of Hearing represented the Commonwealth at the annual summit and convened local stakeholder meetings to review gaps in programs and services. The Department team also includes the Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness. NDC is a national program funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Their focus is to build capacity in states and support the exchange of information and strategies for improving educational programs, services, and outcomes for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Since the creation of this postsecondary grant in 1996, the Department has been an active participant in roundtable discussions on a regional and national level. The Department also serves as a member of the Summer Program Workgroup modeling Virginia’s summer youth program, as well as a member of the Virtual Career Exploration and Work Based Learning work groups reviewing national programs.

In the past, the Department has convened a one-day statewide summer youth event “Opening Doors to Life Beyond High School” for deaf and hard of hearing students, which was jointly held at the annual Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Professional Development Institute (Opening Doors – Unlocking Potential). After the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020 the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program successfully held a three-day summer program for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in 2021 at WWRC. This was held for the first time on the WWRC campus, with the residential support of the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program Services. All DARS staff used American Sign Language and interpreters were provided for students who were not fluent signers; therefore, making the entire program a total immersion experience for all students. Sessions incorporated all five Pre-ETS core services with a focus of “Deaf at Work.” The Department’s Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf are part of the team in developing this program and the goal was to bring in Deaf Mentors (former consumers) to share stories about their journeys as they “mapped their future.” This program has continued with new and returning students. In 2022, there were five deaf students and in 2023 there were 11 deaf and hard of hearing students. The returning students were given leadership roles in several sessions. The 2023 session included an outdoor scavenger hunt with items related to employment such as a brick bricklayer), matchbox cars (auto mechanics, auto detailing), coffee supplies (barista). Additionally, the Program Director from the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing became a part of the planning team and instructor in 2022. Based on students’ evaluations, plans for 2024 will expand the program to four days.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

(J) Coordination with Education Officials.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to students with disabilities. A student with a disability is an individual between the ages of 14 through 21. However, a student with a disability who has not earned a standard diploma, may be age 22 if the student is enrolled in a recognized education program and has not yet had their 22nd birthday before September 30. That student would then qualify to receive Pre-ETS through the last day of that school year. The age range for Pre-ETS is based on the *Code of Virginia* and also aligns with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) policies established for Pre-ETS.

Vocational rehabilitation transition services are those coordinated activities for both students and youth (an individual with a disability between the ages of 14 to 24) designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Pre-ETS are only available to students with disabilities, whereas vocational rehabilitation transition services may be provided to both students and youth with disabilities (based upon eligibility requirements). All policies and practices are in alignment with those established by DBVI for the delivery of transition services.

During FFY 2023, DARS served approximately 4,632 students with disabilities. During FFY 2023, DARS opened 2,324 Potentially Eligible cases (i.e., students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for the VR program) and nearly 987 Potentially Eligible Students applied for VR services, which allowed them to access the full continuum of VR services. DARS provided 16,006 “in-house” Pre-ETS and approximately 412 students participated in Pre-ETS activities provided by DARS vendors. DARS anticipates services to continue to grow as the agency is currently serving over 2,733 students with disabilities.

Each local education agency (LEA) across the Commonwealth has at least one DARS counselor assigned to it. The counselor informs students, parents/guardians, and school staff about the continuum of services the agency offers and facilitates the opening of a Potentially Eligible case or an application for VR services. These counselors are actively engaged in the secondary schools throughout the Commonwealth to support students with receiving Pre-ETS prior to applying to the VR program, accepting referrals for VR services, developing Individualized Plans for Employment with those determined eligible for services, and providing information to school personnel, parents/guardians, and students on the value of services available through DARS. Other means to improve and expand services for students with disabilities include:

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- Cooperating and coordinating with the Department of Education and LEAs to facilitate an effective continuum of transition services for students with disabilities, including Pre-ETS, so students are better prepared to engage in competitive, integrated employment, post-secondary education, and community living.
 - Producing transition-related products (e.g., newsletters, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, and posters) with examples of best practices, services available, and problem solving.
 - Collaborating with Employment Service Organizations and Virginia's Centers for Independent Living to increase Pre-ETS activities offerings that would assist in improving the LEA, DARS and student connections and outcomes.
 - Collaborating with Employment Service Organization staff to increase awareness of local vendor programs that could provide services to schools and transition age youth.
 - Expanding the number of Project SEARCH sites in Virginia, as appropriate. DARS currently has 19 sites and is expected to have 20 sites during the 2024-2025 academic year.
 - Expanding the number of Start on Success Programs in Virginia, as appropriate. There are currently 8 programs and Virginia is expected to have nine programs in PY 2024. DARS counselors work closely with each project and DARS provides for wage reimbursement for the first three years of each project.

DARS' policies require that for students with disabilities who i) are receiving special education services from a public school, and ii) also are determined eligible for VR services (and able to be served if DARS is under an Order of Selection), that the Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP) shall be completed and signed within 90 days of the eligibility determination and before the student leaves the school setting.

When an IEP meeting invitation is received from the school division, DARS' staff responds to the invitation and participates in the meeting by attending in person, virtually, by phone, or provides information that can be shared with students, staff, and parents/guardians (e.g., DARS' contact and program information). DARS' staff coordinate in the development of the IEP with the teacher, student, and parent prior to the IEP Meeting for open cases. General information about Pre-ETS and VR Services can be provided during the IEP meeting for potential new cases as well as by establishing open lines of communication with school staff and provides information on how DARS' counselors can work with school staff to provide activities related to individual transition goals and activities for post-secondary education /training, employment, and independent living. DARS' staff coordinate the need for Pre-ETS by:

- Communicating with school staff and providing information about Pre-ETS services and

how they relate to transition goals and activities in students' IEPs;

- Participating in school division events;
- Participating as members of school division committees such as Transition Councils;
- Presenting information about Pre-ETS services to staff; and
- Developing good working relationships with school division administrators.

DARS' staff, in conjunction with the IEP case manager, reviews the Transition Section of the IEP with the student, parent/guardian, and teacher during face-to face meetings at the school (which in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic may be conducted virtually). Reviewing the goals on the IEP assists the Pre-ETS Counselor with identifying what services the school is providing to help the individual meet their transition goals. This information is utilized to help the team plan what services DARS could provide to assist the student achieve their transition goals. It is a best practice to make sure that the DARS' team members' input is shared with the IEP teams prior to the school-based IEP meetings so that it can be used in developing ongoing IEP transition goals.

DARS' staff also identifies, and coordinates needed Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. DARS' counselors serving potentially eligible (PE) students collaborate with the student, the student's school, their parent/guardian and, as applicable, other relevant team members to identify the topics and objectives team members have or will address with the student. The DARS' counselor then supports the student with receiving services to address the remaining topics. This promotes a truly collaborative approach to Pre-ETS and ensures DARS does not duplicate services. In addition, DARS' staff coordinates the need for Pre-ETS by communicating with school staff, providing information about Pre-ETS services and how they relate to transition goals and activities in the IEP, participating in school division events, being active members of school division committees such as Transition Councils, presenting about Pre-ETS to school division staff, and developing good working relationships with school division administrators.

DARS' Transition and Education Coordinator has also partnered with school division staff to plan summer program offerings. The offerings are based on students' needs and available resources in the local communities. Throughout the Commonwealth, the Department has had numerous summer programs provided by DARS' counselors and Employment Service Organizations. Summer opportunities have included work-based learning experiences, both paid and unpaid, that may last for up to eight weeks. Other programs offered include the remaining four Pre-ETS standards. Employment Service Organizations have developed programs lasting anywhere from one week to eight weeks of classroom-based instruction for groups of students as well as workplace experiences in areas where DARS may not have the capacity to provide those services.

DARS continues to be a stakeholder in the review of data that VDOE collects to report to the Office on Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support and accomplish respective post-school and employment outcomes required by the federal government and to provide meaningful data collection by each agency.

Additional DARS and VDOE collaborative activities include co-chairing statewide interagency collaborative groups. Representatives from DARS, VDOE, and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired plan statewide trainings to discuss transition and vocational services and initiatives available to students with disabilities and federal and state regulations related to transition services. This activity provides a forum for transition practitioners and other interested stakeholders from school divisions, adult agencies, and community partners to engage in professional development activities, networking opportunities, and collaborative efforts that enhance the implementation of quality transition services for secondary school students with disabilities. The Community of Practice works to stay abreast of current transition information, to identify gaps in resources, and avoid duplication of transition services.

Additionally, for many years the State Coordinator for the Deaf has served as a member of the Virginia Network of Consultants: Professional Working with Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOC). This group was created by the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. While the members provide consultation to Virginia's school divisions to promote/enhance education services, DARS' role is to foster collaboration and exchange information related to transition services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Statewide Transition Specialist also serves as a member of the planning team for Opening Doors - Unlocking Potential, which is Virginia's premier professional development in deaf and hard of hearing education. The Department's Deaf Services Program is an exhibitor and provides workshops at this annual event, as well as webinars sponsored through the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. With the Technical Assistance Center and the Virginia School for the Deaf, the Department's Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness is part of the statewide team coordinating outreach activities with Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing across the Commonwealth to connect them with the regional rehabilitation counselors serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This statewide team has also partnered with the state parent organization and developed virtual online activities for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The Department's Transition and Education Coordinator and expert field staff provide training to staff through in-person activities and virtual meetings. Training is provided to new counselors as part of the New Counselors Skills Training. This training provides information on how to provide Pre-ETS/Transition services to support a career pathways approach and how to evaluate and process VR training cases to ensure that employment goals meet the employment needs of our communities. Virtual meetings are used to streamline processes and improve communication with field staff involved with serving transition-age youth. The monthly meetings offer a time saving alternative to the standard face-to-face training approach while simultaneously saving agency resources. Webinar topics are developed based on staff input, leadership recommendations, and developing issues.

For several years, the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the National Deaf Center (NDC) "Engage for Change|State." This collaboration focuses on critical issues in deaf education that address positive student outcomes, graduation and transition to post-

secondary education and training. The Department's State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (SCD) and the Department of Education Specialist of Deaf and Hard of Hearing represented the state at the annual summit and convened local stakeholder meetings to review gaps in programs and services. The Department team also includes the Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness. NDC is a national program funded by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Their focus is to build capacity in states and support the exchange of information and strategies for improving educational programs, services and outcomes for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Since the creation of this postsecondary grant in 1996, the Department has been an active participant in roundtable discussions of state teams hosted by the grant on a regional and national level. The Department also serves as a member of the Summer Program Workgroup modeling Virginia's summer youth program, as well as a member of the Virtual Career Exploration and Work Based Learning workgroups reviewing national programs. In the past, the Department has convened a one-day statewide summer youth event "Opening Doors to Life Beyond High School" for deaf and hard of hearing students, which was jointly held at the annual Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Professional Development Institute. The Department planned to relocate the summer deaf youth program in 2020 to the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sessions were held virtually.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program successfully held a three-day summer program for seven students who are deaf and hard of hearing in 2021 at WWRC. While this was the third annual event, it was held for the first time on the WWRC campus, with the residential support of the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program Services. The PERT Program assists students in their transition from high school to post-secondary options. All DARS staff used American Sign Language and interpreters were provided for students who were not fluent signers; therefore, making the entire program a total immersion experience for all students. Sessions incorporated all five Pre-ETS core services with a focus of "Deaf at Work." The Department's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf are part of the team in developing this program and the goal was to bring in deaf mentors (former consumers) to share stories about their journeys as they "mapped their future." This program has continued with new and returning students. In 2022, there were five deaf students and in 2023 there were 11 deaf and hard of hearing students. The returning students were given leadership roles in several sessions. The 2023 session included an outdoor scavenger hunt with items related to employment such as a brick bricklayer), matchbox cars (auto mechanics, auto detailing), coffee supplies (barista). Additionally, the Program Director from the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing became a part of the planning team and instructor in 2022. Based on students' evaluations, plans for 2024 will expand the program to four days.

2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 CFR 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;

B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

DARS and VDOE have a formal agreement to provide cooperation and coordination among the two agencies to facilitate effective transition services for students with disabilities to engage in competitive, integrated employment, post-secondary education, and community living. VDOE is designated as the lead agency to ensure that students with disabilities are properly referred to DARS and DARS will serve as the lead agency to determine eligibility for VR services and to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Both agencies agree to:

(1) Promote the development and expansion of collaborative structures for planning and evaluating transition services; share relevant data; share contact information on school divisions' special education directors and 504 coordinators; and explore new opportunities for collaboration regarding the provision of Pre-ETS, secondary transition, and vocational

rehabilitation services and resources. Each agency will assign or designate primary program responsibility for transition to one individual within the agency.

(2) Promote a comprehensive personnel development approach through the provision of collaboratively planned and jointly sponsored professional development activities. VDOE has the responsibility for ensuring the requirements for the provision of special education services by LEAs to students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, agency policies and guidelines.

(3) VDOE shall commit financial resources to: (a) teaching positions for Vocational Training, the Workplace Readiness Skills Program at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), (b) career and workforce development at WWRC, and (c) the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition Program (PERT) program at WWRC.

(4) DARS commits financial resources to: (a) transition services, including Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. Activities include career counseling and exploration, vocational evaluation, case management, situational assessments, field transition consultant services, and technical assistance, as appropriate; (b) the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition Program (PERT) at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center; and (c) activities for the Community of Practice. DARS is responsible for the coordination, provision, and/or payment of rehabilitative/transition goods and services for individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, agency policies and guidelines.

The Cooperative Agreement between DARS and the Department of Education was executed on February 25, 2017. Under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, it is to be reviewed annually by both Agencies and remains in effect until altered by amendment or terminated by either Agency with no less than 30 days' notice in writing. This Agreement may also be amended by mutual consent of both Departments, provided that any changes are agreed to in writing at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change. A focus of the agreement is to provide collaborative training opportunities between school personnel and DARS Counselors to increase collaborative transition services which lead to improved outcomes for students with disabilities. Another focus of the agreement is the importance of sharing data between agencies. The cooperative agreement is currently under review to be updated with particular attention to addressing collaborative training opportunities.

VDOE and DARS will collaborate to disseminate information across their respective agencies and local offices pertinent to secondary transition and vocational rehabilitation services and resources. The agreement also confirms that DARS and LEAs will not enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity as defined in 34 CFR 397.5 (d) for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment.

Both agencies will provide collaborative training opportunities for recertification points for counselors and teachers.

Each agency is responsible for collaborating in the coordination and/or provision of transition goods and services for individuals with disabilities, as well as the provision of technical assistance and dissemination of information to individuals with disabilities,

parents, employers, service providers, and other community members. Grant opportunities with federal, state, and local agencies and other private and public partners will be jointly pursued.

Additionally, DARS works collaboratively with local education agencies to develop cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreement outline:

- Coordination and Collaboration –this discusses who is the lead agency for specific activities such as informing students of services available through DARS and determining eligibility for DRS services.
- Consultation and Technical Assistance – This section describes the consultation and technical assistance DARS provides to local school divisions to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities (e.g., attending IEP meetings, person centered planning meetings, transition planning meetings, career fairs, transition fairs, etc.).
- Pre-ETS & VR Transition Services–These sections describe each of the services DARS provides in the continuum of transition services.
- Interagency Planning between VR and the School Division ensures students/families are informed about DARS and school responsibilities in referring/obtaining documentation for DARS services.
- Interagency Planning between VR, WWRC, and the School Division focused on PERT planning and recruitment activities. Discusses the roles of LEA coordinators, DARS VRCs and WWRC admissions team.
- Cross-Training Opportunities – Outlines how staff members of each agency will provide regular training to the other regarding services provided. i.e., in-service trainings at staff meetings, financial responsibilities - outlines the financial responsibilities of each agency in regard to service provision.
- Dispute Resolution - Outlines the process to resolve disputes related to financial responsibility of each agency.
- Youth and Subminimum Wage Employment – Affirms that neither agency will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability receives or is compensated at subminimum wage. Furthermore, outlines the documentation requirements of each agency to *comply with the requirements set forth in 34 CFR § 397.10*.

(K) Coordination with Employers.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The DARS' Workforce Development Unit coordinates and participates in activities to meet business needs. Activities include, but are not limited to, the assessment of job candidate's skills and abilities to meet job requirements. Businesses are offered disability etiquette training on hiring persons with disabilities and educational training on Assistive Technology, on-the-job training, tax credits, work-site accommodations, and various other services needed to meet business needs. The Workforce Development Unit is seen as a single point of contact for businesses recruiting for job openings and hosts monthly/quarterly Commonwealth Business Network meetings where businesses are able to describe their job openings and job requirements to multiple organizations in one setting to recruit qualified job candidates. The DARS' Workforce Unit is actively working with the National Employment Team (The NET) through the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation using a Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) where businesses may place job openings and select qualified candidates. The Unit also provides education to employers who are federal contractors (503) on hiring individuals with disabilities and assisting with recruitment efforts to meet business needs. The Unit is listed as the point of contact on all compliance letters sent to 503 employers in the Commonwealth from the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

DARS works collaboratively with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and multiple state agencies and partner organizations to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in the social and economic life of the Commonwealth and to engage in remunerative employment. The DARS' Workforce Unit will assist with identifying work experiences, paid internships, job shadowing, and mentoring opportunities. The Unit also will work with the Department of Human Resource Management in identifying the skill set needed for many hard-to-fill positions within Virginia state employment and assist with recruiting qualified persons with disabilities to fill the positions. The Unit currently will continue to strengthen relationships with Economic Development Partnerships in Virginia, the Virginia Manufacturers Association, the Virginia Rural Summit, local government agencies, Virginia colleges and universities and Workforce Development Boards Business Services Teams to assist and promote hiring persons with disabilities in the Commonwealth's Workforce.

The DARS Business Services Team with the assistance of DARS Assistive Technology staff presented Windmills Training to state agencies, businesses, and community partners throughout 2023. The group offered 52 trainings to approximately 1,75 individuals. This program has been extremely successful, and the six originally trained staff has increased to over 50 DARS staff who have been certified to provide these trainings. There is now adequate coverage for in-person trainings across the Commonwealth. In 1982, the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities identified employer's attitudes and misconceptions as major barriers to increasing the employment rate of people with disabilities. With the support of a grant from the California Employment Development Department, the California Governor's Committee developed the concept of Windmills. Windmills is designed to increase awareness of the role that attitudes play in the employment of people with disabilities. DARS has received approval as trainers for all of the Windmills' modules through both Human Resources Certification Institute and Society for

Human Resource Management credits which also expands DARS' ability to market the training to employers. The DARS Windmills training is actively promoted by DHRM and the WIOA Accessibility Taskforce to increase staff proficiency in working with individuals with disabilities at state agencies and WIOA partners.

The modules presented include:

- **Pick a Disability/Profiles** – This examines the stereotypes associated with common disabilities that can affect employment decisions. It explores assumptions about “good” and “bad” jobs for certain disabilities and demystifies myths regarding people with disabilities in the workplace.
- **Fact or Fiction** – This teaches participants to anticipate situations that might occur in the workplace with people with disabilities. It also familiarizes individuals on the basics of disability law.
- **Whose Fault** – This exercise improves participants' awareness of the different players and roles in a successful business program employing persons with disabilities and identifies more ways to effectively communicate with one another and resolve conflict.
- **Assistive Technology and Reasonable Accommodations** – This module acquaints participants with the creative process in identifying possible reasonable accommodations.

In 2023 a new module was added, “Taking Emotions out of Emotional Disabilities,” which explores the effects of employers' reactions to emotional disabilities and how employers can offer reasonable accommodations to create an emotionally neutral environment. The DARS team regularly contributes to the quarterly community of practice meetings that includes state vocational rehabilitation agency business services staff from across the country.

The DARS Business Services team is frequently contacted for help and assistance from other certified Windmills trainers. Virginia law states that it is the policy of the Commonwealth to promote and increase the employment of individuals with disabilities directly employed at all levels and occupations by state agencies, institutions, boards, and authorities of the Commonwealth (Virginia Code § 2.2- 203.2:3). In 2021, Virginia enacted legislation to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by streamlining application processes for positions in Virginia state government (Virginia Code § 2.2-1213). This Alternative Application Process increases employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities on a permanent or temporary basis. Currently, Virginia's Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) and DARS finalized this process, and it went into effect April 5, 2022, allowing qualified individuals with disabilities access to high-quality positions within Virginia's 252 state agencies. The Alternative Application Process has created additional partnerships with state agencies and driven additional referrals to local DARS offices. As of July 1, 2023, current state employees with disabilities are also allowed to utilize this process. DARS fielded 1083 requests for certificate of disability during the most recent Federal fiscal year and issued 646 while referring 255 individuals to DARS offices around the state for additional vocational rehabilitation services.

DARS, in partnership with other state agencies, received a \$9.2 million grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The project, named “Pathways,” serves Virginians with disabilities to acquire skills-based training and registered apprenticeships in high-wage, high-demand fields, including STEM and state government. In this five-year project, DARS will collaborate with multiple workforce agencies in Virginia, including the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), and the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI). This project also capitalizes on recent state legislation that facilitates the Alternative State Job Application Process for eligible individuals with disabilities, which is designed to increase access to services in an equitable manner. It also includes the creation of DARS staff positions, one embedded at DOLI and the other at DHRM to develop cross-agency policy and practices to increase recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals with disabilities in these in-demand jobs.

Included in this project will be opportunities to facilitate the development of effective services for unserved and underserved populations. Examples of outreach activities include targeting traditionally unserved and underserved groups, sharing best practices for training, credentials and education, and activities leading to apprenticeship opportunities. This project will also serve to cement best practices from the previous Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) grant and make them available statewide.

Transition Services, Including Pre-Employment Services, for Students and Youth with Disabilities

During FFY 2022, 31.7% of DARS cases were 22 years of age or younger. During FFY 2023, 37.4% of DARS cases were 22 years of age or younger. All DARS counselors are trained to work with this population to prepare them for employment as many have exited or are preparing to exit the school environment. However, after reviewing outcomes and staffing patterns most offices have reinstituted the use of dedicated transition counselors to work with youth to address their specialized needs and services. The DARS Development Managers and Placement Counselors work collaboratively with VR Counselors and consumers to design Employment Plans with services designed to lead to successful employment for this population, many of whom are first entering the job market.

(L) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are **not** carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES))
CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The Virginia Assistive Technology Systems (VATS) is housed at DARS and has a highly collaborative relationship with the VR Program. VATS regularly assists with training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge of VR professionals in the use of Assistive Technology (AT) with VR consumers. In FFY 2022, VATS provided services to 7,491 older adults and Virginians with disabilities through the AT Act program. In FY 2021, 6,153 individuals were served. Services included AT device demonstrations, short-term equipment loans, durable medical equipment reuse, trainings, and information and assistance. Service recipients included an array of Virginians to include individuals with disabilities, family members, healthcare and allied health professionals, employers, educators, and representatives of community living services were provided statewide.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

AgrAbility Virginia assists individuals and their families who farm, and have illnesses, injuries or disabilities that are impeding their ability to work safely, effectively, and productively. DARS has a strong collaborative relationship with this program and receives referrals from this project.

The DARS Rehabilitation Technology Services team meets virtually on a regular basis with the Virginia AgrAbility project to discuss potential referrals, program/agency updates and provide technical assistance. This cooperative relationship is working well.

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

DARS works with Social Services, Adult Education, Community Services Boards, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Treatment Facilities like the AVALON Center in Williamsburg, and various other private or public community agencies to share information about services and accept referrals. Additionally, DARS collaborates with Brain Injury Clubhouses, Centers for Independent Living, and other non-profit organizations serving individuals with disabilities with referrals and services to out of-school youth leading to their employment and independence

Local DARS Offices provide community mapping strategies to identify partners for comparable benefits, resources, and collaboration to assist out of school youth with service provision. An example of this took place in Martinsville, several years ago. DARS helped facilitate a program called Bridges Out of Poverty which essentially brought a community of agencies together to provide comprehensive services and supports for out of school youth and other individuals partnering with the United Way of Henry County.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

The Commonwealth of Virginia, as provided in Virginia Code § 2.2-1117, has a state use contracting program for services, articles and commodities performed or produced by persons, or in schools or workshops, under the supervision of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. In addition, Virginia Code § 2.2-1118 for the purchase of items or

services from Employment Service Organizations without competitive procurement with certain requirements.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

In Virginia, the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) is the agency responsible for the State Medicaid Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. DARS collaborates with DMAS to address the planning and coordination of services to individuals with most significant disabilities that leads to successful employment. In addition, DARS' staff serve on the Virginia Employment First Advisory Group where DARS and DMAS work collaboratively to implement Virginia's Strategic Plan for Employment First. Employment is the first and preferred option for Virginians with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly financed systems. Along with other state agencies, DARS and DMAS have partnered to improve employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Joint efforts include addressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's provider community that provide Individual Supported Employment services to persons with disabilities by providing technical assistance and training to both stakeholders and providers.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

In Virginia, the agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health services is the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). DARS has a Cooperative Agreement with DBHDS which is in the process of being updated to develop opportunities for competitive-integrated employment for VR consumers. The Cooperative Agreement has been developed with respect to the delivery of VR services for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver. The Cooperative Agreement addresses:

- consultation and technical assistance between the agencies to assist in the planning and coordination of services to individuals with most significant disabilities leading to successful employment;
- roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency;
- data sharing;
- procedures for outreach to and identification of potential VR consumers to receive services; and
- technical assistance to Employment Services Organizations regarding expectations of service delivery.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES;

DBHDS is also the state agency responsible for providing mental health services. Accordingly, DBHDS has provided DARS with fiscal and personnel resources to support the co-location of VR counselors in the Community Services Boards (CSBs) since 1988. The resources contributed by DBHDS allow DARS to have dedicated specialty counselors to provide VR

services to individuals that experience substance abuse disorders that also receive treatment services through the CSB service system. DARS also provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, most of whom are also served by CSBs. In addition, DARS' staff serve on the Virginia Employment First Advisory Group and work closely with DBHDS on various work groups and initiatives that focus on recovery and the integration of work into the mental health service system. In addition, DARS collaborates with DBHDS to develop the Individual Placement Supports Model of Supported Employment.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

In addition to partnerships established and enhanced through development and implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) system in Virginia, DARS continues to emphasize the importance and necessity of cooperating with other community partners (federal, state, and local agencies and programs) to assist in providing comprehensive and effective services for VR customers. One of the most successful cooperative relationships has been with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to provide services to individuals with substance abuse and with serious mental illness. The relationship with DBHDS continues to grow, and the data shows the success to our customers brought about by this relationship.

The DBHDS Office of Substance Use Disorders has provided DARS with fiscal and personnel resources to support the co-location of VR counselors in the Community Services Boards (CSBs) since 1988. The resources contributed by DBHDS allow DARS to have dedicated specialty counselors to provide VR services to individuals who experience substance use disorders and receive treatment services through the CSB service system. The program expanded in the middle of SFY 2000 from three counselors to nineteen counselors serving 18 of the forty CSBs. DARS also provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, most of whom are also served by CSBs. In addition, DARS' staff serve on Virginia's Employment First Advisory Group and work closely with DBHDS on various work groups and initiatives that focus on recovery and the integration of work into the mental health service system. Consultants from both the Office of Substance Use Disorders and the Office of Behavioral Health collaborate with DARS in conducting annual meetings to provide program updates, provide in-service training opportunities, and regularly share information to promote a common understanding of the strategies and practices to serve individuals with substance abuse and/or serious mental illness. DARS has two employees who specialize in intellectual and developmental disabilities to provide technical assistance, guidance, and direction to VR counselors in serving this population.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

Private non-profit, for-profit providers and Centers for Independent Living can apply to become DARS' VR employment service providers and providers of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Applicants' qualifications are evaluated based on services to be offered and criteria in the standard vendor agreement. DARS and each qualified provider establishes a written provider agreement. This agreement provides assurances to DARS that each

organization complies with federal and state requirements for a community rehabilitation program. This agreement also clearly defines roles, expectations, and evaluation criteria.

Other mechanisms DARS utilizes to cooperate with private non-profit VR service providers include:

- Receiving stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organizations' Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to community rehabilitation programs and the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services state funds, as well as other services that impact providers;
- Fostering close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations; and
- Utilizing the Employment Services Organization Outcome Report to assist Employment Services Organizations, VR counselors, and VR consumers in ensuring appropriate service provision. DARS has been convening regular webinars with Employment Service Organizations to provide information and answer questions about service provision.

Through the implementation of the Ticket to Work Program, DARS is actively working with multiple non-profit organizations, community rehabilitation programs and other groups to increase available services to DARS clients. The technical assistance provided by DARS to these organizations has increased their ability to access federal Ticket to Work funding to increase capacity and service delivery. Recently we have begun working with a Virginia faith-based employment network.

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS:

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program.

ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW GRANT AWARDS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

Please respond to the following requests for information:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) operates under the mission of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) which states; "DARS' mission: to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families." To this end, the Vocational Rehabilitation program ensures quality and equitable access to people with disabilities seeking career/vocational advancement by providing active outreach to marginalized communities, ensuring the availability of our offices/staff in every city and county in Virginia as well as co-locating many of our offices, and providing services in all of the one-stop centers. Through our partnerships with local educational school districts, pre-employment transition services

(Pre-ETS) are available in every school district ensuring that equitable access occurs through K-12 educational programming. These services are also available to charter and alternative schools and by direct parent referral of a student aged 14-22. DARS VR actively partners with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to ensure services are available through our Community Service Boards (CSBs) serving every locality in the state. Through state grant funding, specialized vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) serve substance abuse and mental health consumers. These services are available statewide.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to equitable consumer participation based on the unique and individual needs of consumers. This commitment is outlined and further described in our state VR policies, that ensure equitable access to the vocational rehabilitation program across all populations represented in Virginia. Our administration routinely reviews statewide demographic and consumer access data and creates district benchmarks to increase accessibility and outreach to representative populations. To further ensure access to services for all consumers, policies have been updated to ensure interpretation and translation services can be accessed by all consumers. Additionally, DARS Policy staff remains abreast of the disability access requirements in federal and state law and regulation.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Virginia General VR is committed to the provision of equitable access to all eligible consumers, and we continue to strategize operational enhancements to address barriers as they are identified. Identified barriers include:

- Geographic proximity to services for consumers
- Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Geographic proximity to services: Virginia General VR maintains fully staffed, full-service offices (30 statewide). Many are rural in designation and/or are co-located within one-stop centers to ensure the widest coverage and availability of services statewide. Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling staff are assigned individual schools to provide required Pre-ETS activities and outreach to surrounding communities. General VR Counselors are assigned by county and/or specific territory in urban areas. The use of community-based internet sites ensures that VR staff can work in the closest proximity to assigned caseloads. In addition, the use of video conferencing as well as payment of consumer transportation costs can mitigate consumer equity and access to services.

The Driving Program at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), Virginia's comprehensive rehabilitation center, is working on several initiatives that will enhance virtual service delivery along with the added positive result of increasing WWRC's ability to serve more clients across the state. Virtual services expanded during COVID, and providers have found that the virtual delivery of certain aspects of driver education can augment and facilitate instructional methods that are normally associated with an in-person classroom. WWRC is working to integrate and utilize CANVAS within the driving program to assist with organizing instructional materials and the potential to reach clients remotely. For the classroom component of driver's education, WWRC has provided one-on-one virtual instruction to a total of 46 clients since 2021 (by comparison, in-person training serves an average of 72 clients per year). The use of CANVAS will continue to allow for a more organized and efficient delivery method for both the client and the instructor, in-person and virtually.

WWRC is working on developing a virtual re-exam course to be approved by DMV. "Re-exam" refers to coursework that must be completed to allow a client to take the learner's permit test after 3 consecutive fails. Being able to offer a virtual re-exam class delivered via CANVAS will reach a larger number of clients in the state, many of whom it may not be easy to come to WWRC for in-person services.

The Communication Services Department at WWRC also developed virtual service delivery methods during the pandemic. Since 2020, 26 clients have received one-on-one virtual service for various needs such as evaluation/treatment, assistive technology (alternative and augmentative communication), and fluency. Therapists in this department are currently providing in-person instruction in the pragmatics of communication in all the vocational training programs and work readiness programs (WRP) at WWRC. The potential to offer this service virtually to other clients in the Commonwealth is being explored based upon need and staffing resources.

Virtual PERT is a service line that was originally developed when students were not able to come to WWRC during COVID closures. The virtual option continues to be beneficial for students who may live in more remote areas or who do not elect to participate in campus-based programming. This program is best utilized by students early in the transition process. The program uses common virtual technologies to deliver services to students originally in their homes and now mostly at their home school. Content for the virtual program consists of PowerPoint presentations, videos and interactions with PERT On-Site Rehabilitation Counselors and PERT Residential staff. To date, 552 students have been served.

WWRC is providing virtual case management services to DARS clients participating in the 11-week IT Essentials Bootcamp. The program prepares clients to sit for the A+ Certification test by participating in the CompTIA curriculum. In addition to the CompTIA coursework, clients also participate in curriculum to enhance their workplace readiness behaviors, study skills, and trade-related academic skills. At the conclusion of the bootcamp, case management responsibilities transfer to the DARS vocational rehabilitation counselor for transitional planning and job seeking services.

Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services: DARS continues to partner with Employment Service Organizations (ESO) statewide to build and sustain quality Pre-ETS programming/Work Based learning for student and youth populations. This capacity building has expanded to ESOs that provide services across state lines which has resulted in new providers with strong reputations for service excellence moving into broader communities in our southernmost points of the state. We will continue to support growth and expansion.

DARS VR maintains a regularly scheduled staffing presence in all comprehensive one-stop centers across the Commonwealth and serves as a single point of contact for consumers with identified disabilities.

DARS VR has full office operations in several one-stop centers, statewide, and works collaboratively with center partners to share employer information across systems. VR Counselors utilize this information in guidance and counseling with consumers through the VR process.

DARS VR has an elected seat on each Workforce Development Board across the Commonwealth and maintains an active voice on behalf of VR services and people with disabilities.

Partnerships with employers continued by providing Windmills Training. This past year 52 trainings were offered on Windmills' disability awareness training, impacting 1,751 human resource professionals and/or employers. Additionally, DARS applied to be a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) trainer so that when offering these trainings to HR professionals, they are able to receive continuing education credits to maintain their professional credentials.

DRS offices work collaboratively with WWRC in the referral and admissions process to technical education provided in this supported setting. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are part of discharge planning and work with WWRC to find and support employment post-graduation.

DRS offices build and sustain working relationships with Employment Service Organization (ESO) providers for job coaching and placement related services.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides state funds to ESOs to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community-based employment options for persons with the most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services will be available to Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs as appropriated by the Virginia General Assembly.

DRS conducts district wide meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities. These sessions

address increasing supported-employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC provides training and technical assistance to Employment Service Organizations related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment as well as implementing a fidelity scale for Customized Employment services.

DRS continues to have a collaborative relationship with the Employment Service Organizations (ESO) through the ESO provider network and the Employment Services Organizations' Steering Committee (ESOSC). Through the ESOSC DARS receives stakeholder input from Employment Services Organizations that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to community rehabilitation programs and the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services state funds, as well as other services that impact providers, such as Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services. This fosters close working relationships between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations.

DRS continues to utilize the Employment Services Organization Outcome Report to assist Employment Services Organizations, VR counselors, and VR consumers in ensuring appropriate service provision. The outcomes report is reviewed annually with ESOs to provide information and answer questions about service provision.

Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities: Following the pandemic, access to some schools/districts had been restricted as relationships between Virginia VR and educational districts needed to be strengthened and rebuilt. 2022-23 brought increased outreach where access had been limited. VR districts held large events focused on services to students with disabilities that were well attended by educators and partners. These efforts brought increased VR visibility and educator engagement in the collaborative process. These efforts will continue and expand with the Virginia Department of Education Transition staff who have jointly held meetings with Special Education Directors (SPED), special education teachers and Virginia VR statewide.

All districts were required to implement and sustain community-based outreach to non-traditional referral sources. In the most recent program year, each district provided a variety of outreach events that were well attended by local community members. DARS offices, in partnership with DARS HR, are working to engage representative demographics in staff recruitment efforts. Partnerships with the Pathways grant includes targeted outreach and recruiting for bilingual staff.

Community PERT mobile units are being implemented to reestablish relationships between PERT and local school areas that are currently underutilizing DARS services. PERT staff traveled to King William County to provide an independent living exploration service to students at the local high school. This community effort provided two days of interest inventories, career awareness exposure, and independent living assessment. Independent living activities included developing a budget for real life situations, cooking, kitchen safety, medication management, hygiene, self-esteem, and problem-solving assessments. Community PERT mobiles will result in additional services through PERT for students in these localities. In 2024, mobile visits are scheduled for Lancaster County, Northumberland County, Richmond County, and Westmoreland County.

In its second year, the Pathways to Careers grant is now in 15 offices and has worked with over 200 clients. DARS has partnered with the Department of Labor's Division of Registered Apprenticeship and Cyber Civilian to develop a peer recovery specialist registered apprenticeship and are beginning to assist clients enter this career. The Pathways grant is working on the development of a Spanish language job club and has targeted the grant's advisory workgroup to Hispanic participants to address this underserved population and increase the agency's effectiveness in serving this community. The grant has focused on creating a Hispanic Advisory board to better inform the grant team and reach unserved and underserved populations. Under the grant, data is shared with offices regarding who is being served and who is not being served. This approach is increasing counselor awareness of unserved and underserved populations.

While conducting outreach to local educational agencies, the DARS transition team has developed and participated in numerous events. These include CREATE Transition events in the Southwest and Hampton districts, presentations with other DARS staff including Connect for Success, Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education (VCASE), Mission Transition Start on Success, and the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). The presentations were attended by parent resource center personnel, special education directors, special education teachers, and military education leaders from across the Commonwealth.

A Model Interagency Pre-ETS Program collaborative with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has been initiated in Gloucester High School, and will be in Hampton and Phoebus High Schools, as well as Albemarle and Monticello High Schools. This multi-year project will be expanded to all six districts and will focus on the strategic training and enhancement of Pre-ETS through a professional development and support model. VCU will provide multistage training designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of DARS staff and Pre-ETS vendors, and improve communication and collaboration between DARS, schools, families, and Pre-ETS service providers. The components of the model will include: 1) annual regionally based training for DARS counselors and other staff; 2) the facilitation of a work-based learning course; 3) a framework to assess a student's level of needs and flow of service provisions; and 4) regional-specific technical assistance. These components will build upon each other, leading to multi-pronged development that will directly impact student outcomes.

The Transition Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) has been emailed to every Special Education Director in Virginia's public high schools. The future quantitative results will be shared with the Council as well as the qualitative information obtained from identified focus groups.

DARS has entered into a several agreements to enhance services to underserved areas of the state and populations:

- Bloom Consulting has started to provide services in the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck and other Fredericksburg Schools which have all been identified as underserved. In addition to Bloom Consulting, a Drone Academy Day has been marketed to appropriate DARS staff in these underserved areas.
- An updated contract with the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) to provide continued peer mentoring services to at-risk students is almost finalized. The continued contract was recommended based on positive feedback from DARS Offices in Northern Virginia, Harrisonburg and on the Peninsula.
- A contract with the Center for Family Involvement has been submitted to procurement for next steps. This collaborative partnership will provide services to culturally and linguistically diverse transition aged youth and their families with culturally sensitive information and strategies for navigating Pre-ETS. A goal of the program is to develop at least five products for culturally and linguistically diverse youth with disabilities and their families that considers preferred idioms, customs, literacy, and formats as well as generational preferences.

DARS has contracted with the National Technical Assistance Center-The Collaborative (NTACT-C) for technical assistance to ensure that internal processes are in place to obtain needed data to make informed decisions regarding Pre-ETS and the continuum of transition services.

DARS has actively participated in the federally funded CAPE Youth project to increase collaboration and effectiveness in serving pre-ETS and transition cases. The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth (CAPE-Youth) is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, The Council of State Governments, and the K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University. The Center was created in 2019 by the U.S. Department of Labor. It seeks to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities by helping states build capacity in their youth service delivery and workforce systems. As a result of this partnership, two CAPE-Youth fellows recorded a webinar for DARS counselors and clients on how to ask for accommodations in college. This recording is now available on our website. Additionally, DARS participated in a social network analysis through this project which has resulted in a planning meeting with other WIOA partners designed to increase collaboration and outcomes for transition, justice involved and out of school youth with disabilities. DARS has actively developed paid summer work experiences for transition students and paid work experiences for DARS clients with recently earned credentials but no work experience to add real experience to a resume.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Virginia VR began efforts to mitigate identified barriers in 2022 following the pandemic and as operations expanded. Community outreach and efforts targeted on increasing agency visibility are a key priority of all statewide field offices. These efforts will continue and will be sustained ongoing as an effort to increase public perception and general knowledge of the contribution the VR process makes to strengthening the lives and employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages.

Targeted community outreach to increase visibility and equity of service access began in 2023 which led to an increase in VR applications statewide. These efforts will continue and will be expanded based on demographic and service data as it informs our current efforts.

The expansion of Pre-ETS services for students with disabilities is the focus of our efforts in 2023-24. Increasing visibility, access to quality programming, expanding relationships with special education transition and school personnel as well as increasing vendor capacity as well as full utilization and expenditure of Pre-ETS set aside dollars are outlined in our corrective action plan.

Notes:

1. Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.
2. Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
3. Applicants may have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

Vocational Rehabilitation - Deaf

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

(A) STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. DBVI has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

The DBVI State Rehabilitation Council is composed of 15 positions that encompass a wide range of unique perspectives related to programs or personal experiences. The members of

the DBVI SRC are listed below along with the mandated position that they hold, the term number of the member. Any vacancies on the DBVI SRC are also listed and are actively being sought through partnerships with the Business Community and Government Program leaders.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Leelynn Untalan Brady: Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(i)	1	10/2021
Heidi Lawyer: Representative of a Parent Training and Information Center 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(ii)	1	10/2021
Beth Klein: Representative of Client Assistance Program 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(iii)	1	10/2021
LaSonya Jackson: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor-Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Member 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(iv)	1	10/2023
Rachael Rounds: Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(v)	1	10/2021
Milford Stern: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)	2	10/2023
Mark Roane: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)	1	10/2022
Chanthen Nene: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)	1	10/2022
Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)	Vacant	
Susan Bowmaster: Representative of Disability Advocacy Group 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(3)(ii)(A)	1	10/2023
David Andrews: Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(viii)	1	10/2022
Christine Appert: Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(viii)	2	10/2023
Rebecca Ceja: Representative of Department of Education 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(x)	1	10/2023
Jennifer Sellers: Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent him or herself 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(3)(ii)(B)	1	10/2023
Representative of the Virginia Workforce Board 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(xi)	Vacant	Awaiting Appointment
Commissioner Rick Mitchell: The Director of the designated Statue Unit DBVI as an ex-officio, non-voting member 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(xii)	1	05/2021

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR Agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

[text box] The DBVI SRC has 1 position awaiting appointment from the Virginia Governor's office to fill the Representative of the Virginia Workforce Board position. DBVI is working closely with Virginia businesses and industry leaders, the Virginia Board for Workforce Development, and internal business engagement staff to advocate for application of business partners to fill the remaining vacant SRC role for Representative of Business, Industry and Labor.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

[text box] The DBVI SRC recommendations

SRC Recommendation 1: The SRC recommends that DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2024-2027 State Plan goals.

SRC Recommendation 2: Taking into consideration the feedback received from individuals served by DBVI through surveys, success stories and other anecdotal evidence, the SRC recognizes that self-advocacy is vital to the goal setting and subsequent achievements both personally and professionally of the individuals served. The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to recognize the importance of Self-Advocacy across all age groups and should continue to incorporate these values into its rehabilitation programs and other support services.

SRC Recommendation 3: The SRC recommends the following in regard to the consumer satisfaction survey process:

1. Consumer Satisfaction continues to be collected both annually and on a rolling basis throughout the continuum of service provision.
2. DBVI continues to report on the overall consumer satisfaction rate quarterly at each meeting for review and analysis of continuous improvement efforts.

SRC Recommendation 4: The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to provide the SRC with a dedicated administrative staff person to capture the minutes and discussions therein especially any key action items to be addressed during each SRC meeting and for that staff person to coordinate and collaborate with SRC leadership to offer newly appointed SRC members an orientation to the SRC and its stated purpose at least once a year.

SRC Recommendation 5: The SRC recommends the following regarding the opportunity for members of the public to make comment.

1. DBVI shall continue to provide the opportunity for public meetings, whether virtual or in-person, statewide during the current State Plan cycle and for DBVI to

share the public comments and feedback gathered along with the agency's responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting.

2. DBVI shall continue to provide timely notification of all public meetings (including regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly SRC meeting) on the DBVI website, the designated channel for Virginia on Newline, and through DBVI's official social media accounts. DBVI should make every effort to allow all ages and stakeholders the opportunity for comment, with special emphasis related to focusing on students and youth with disabilities and their parents, and those students attending the Vocational Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

SRC Recommendation 6: With the enhanced emphasis on the dual service approach of supporting both the individual with a disability and the local business community, DBVI should place special emphasis on training Vocational Rehabilitation Staff regarding marketing, job development, job placement, enlisting the assistance of job coaches as appropriate for each individual, and leveraging the expertise of DBVI's Employment Services Organizations partnerships. DBVI shall continue to encourage effective and outcome driven collaboration with the DBVI Business Relations Unit to further increase the likelihood of job placement, paid and unpaid work experiences, and specific job search related skills to prepare the individuals that DBVI serves with the best knowledge, skills and confidence in their abilities throughout the individual's tenure with DBVI. The SRC further recommends that DBVI report on these collaborative efforts at each SRC meeting (minimum of 4 times per year).

Provide the VR Agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input or recommendations.

[text box] **SRC Recommendation 1:** The SRC recommends that DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2024-2027 State Plan goals.

Agency response: DBVI supports this recommendation and will report to the SRC quarterly regarding the progress towards accomplishing the State Plan goals for 2024-2027.

SRC Recommendation 2: Taking into consideration the feedback received from individuals served by DBVI through surveys, success stories and other anecdotal evidence, the SRC recognizes that self-advocacy is vital to the goal setting and subsequent achievements both personally and professionally of the individuals served. The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to recognize the importance of Self-Advocacy across all age groups and should continue to incorporate these values into its rehabilitation programs and other support services.

Agency response: DBVI is in agreement that self-advocacy skills are a crucial component to the individual's achievement of both personal and professional goals. DBVI provides training on appropriate self-advocacy skills through its Pre-Employment Transition Services and the Adult Vocational Rehabilitation program. Additional emphasis is placed on appropriate self-advocacy through DBVI's residential

training program (for both students and adults with disabilities) at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

SRC Recommendation 3: The SRC recommends the following regarding the consumer satisfaction survey process:

1. Consumer Satisfaction continues to be collected both annually and on a rolling basis throughout the continuum of service provision.
2. DBVI continues to report on the overall consumer satisfaction rate quarterly at each meeting for review and analysis of continuous improvement efforts.

Agency Response: DBVI made great strides during the previous state plan cycle (2020-2023) regarding the collection of consumer satisfaction data and feedback to include the hiring of an individual to work part time with the sole focus of reaching out to both current and former participants in DBVI vocational rehabilitation programming to capture their experiences through qualitative and quantitative data collection. DBVI has updated the consumer satisfaction survey to include more targeted questions to allow for analysis and the proper addressing of any feedback that requires an agency response. DBVI agrees to continue providing quarterly updates on the Consumer Satisfaction survey data collected and will provide a full consumer satisfaction report annually for review and input. DBVI will continue to develop new strategies to engage individuals that have received services throughout the consumer satisfaction process.

SRC Recommendation 4: The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to provide the SRC with a dedicated administrative staff person to capture the minutes and discussions therein especially any key action items to be addressed during each SRC meeting and for that staff person to coordinate and collaborate with SRC leadership to offer newly appointed SRC members an orientation to the SRC and its stated purpose at least once a year.

Agency Response: DBVI recognizes the importance of the SRC member's full attention to meeting discussions and opportunities for questions. DBVI agrees to continue providing a dedicated administrative staff person to capture the minutes and discussions therein with a special emphasis of denoting any key action items to be addressed during each SRC meeting. DBVI agrees that the same administrative staff person will coordinate and collaborate with SRC leadership to offer newly appointed SRC members an orientation to the SRC and its stated purpose at least annually.

SRC Recommendation 5: The SRC recommends the following regarding the opportunity for members of the public to make comment.

1. DBVI shall continue to provide the opportunity for public meetings, whether virtual or in-person, statewide during the current State Plan cycle and for DBVI to share the public comments and feedback gathered along with the agency's responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting.
2. DBVI shall continue to provide timely notification of all public meetings (including regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly

SRC meeting) on the DBVI website, the designated channel for Virginia on Newline, and through DBVI's official social media accounts.

DBVI should make every effort to allow individuals of all ages and stakeholders the opportunity for comment, with special emphasis related to focusing on students and youth with disabilities and their parents and with those students attending the Vocational Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

Agency Response: DBVI is committed to continuing to conduct a minimum of four public meetings (either virtual or in person), at least three of which will be conducted in conjunction with consumer group organization meetings. DBVI will continue to provide summaries of public comment and agency responses annually on the DBVI website and on Newline and will share this information with the SRC by emailing an electronic copy to appointed members annually.

DBVI will continue its practice of notification of agency public meetings, including those held in conjunction with state consumer group meetings, but will not assume responsibility for providing notification of state consumer group meetings generally. DBVI will include all consumer group public meetings on the Calendar of Events on the DBVI website if such information is provided by consumer groups.

SRC Recommendation 6: With the enhanced emphasis on the dual customer service approach of supporting both the individual with a disability and the local business community, DBVI should place special emphasis on training Vocational Rehabilitation Staff regarding marketing, job development, job placement, enlisting the assistance of job coaches and Employment Service Organizations as appropriate for each individual, and leveraging the expertise of DBVI's Employment Services Organizations partnerships. DBVI shall continue to encourage effective and outcome driven collaboration with the DBVI Business Relations Unit to further increase the likelihood of job placement, paid and unpaid work experiences, and specific job search related skills to prepare the individuals that DBVI serves with the best knowledge, skills, and confidence in their abilities throughout the individual's tenure with DBVI. The SRC further recommends that DBVI report on these collaborative efforts at each SRC meeting (minimum of 4 times per year).

Agency Response: DBVI will continue its commitment to making Business relations and engagement a priority by engaging with other WIOA partners and continuing business relations efforts both locally and statewide. DBVI will provide continuous training to VR staff in appropriate workforce activities including, but not limited to, job development and placement strategies and education of the workforce partners regarding the viability of the talented pipeline of career seekers that it serves. DBVI will report to the SRC quarterly concerning its ongoing efforts to maintain a collaborative relationship between Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and the Business Relations Unit in an effort to provide critical wrap around services related to job development and placement by providing a report quarterly regarding business and corporate initiatives and WIOA title partners engagement with DBVI's talented and qualified career seekers.

(B) COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA)

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment;

[text box] According to the most recent DBVI Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in April 2022, the % of individuals having the most significant disabilities (MSD) increased by 39 % from 2017 to 2020, with 88.4% being classified as MSD in 2020.

There continues to be limited use of Supported Employment services with a primary concern that many of the Employment Services Organizations (ESOs) who provide Supported Employment services have high turnover rates and limited experience in working with individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind. Extended funding for Supported Employment services was available as needed through Long-Term Employment Support Services. ESO job development, training, and retention remains a top priority to develop for individuals with the most significant disabilities and needing Supported Employment services especially in the more remote rural areas of the state. In 2023, DBVI began holding quarterly meetings with ESOs across the state to provide detailed information regarding blindness as a disability and best practices for working with individuals with vision impairments of all levels and etiologies. DBVI anticipates continuing this practice throughout 2024 with the goal of training new ESO staff as turnover occurs as well as ensuring that a minimum level of education regarding blindness is retained to aid in the job development and employment phases of Supported Employment services.

B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

[text box] Data for ethnicity rates for the general population of the state was obtained from 2019 American Community Survey one-year estimates and the 2014-2019 American Community Survey five-year estimates. The ethnic demographic averages for each region were calculated by adding population totals for each ethnic group and dividing by the total population.

The State's averages for ethnic diversity in the categories of Hispanic/Latino, American Indian and Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander were below the National averages. Whites comprise the largest ethnic group in the State as the average for Whites exceeds all other ethnic category rates by more than 20 % in each Regional Office.

Black or African Americans comprise the second largest ethnic group in the State (19.0%), with an average that is 6.6 % higher than the National average. American Indian and Alaska Natives comprise less than one % of Virginia's population and the averages are identical for the State in each Regional Office.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders residing in Virginia comprise less than one % of the State's population and the rates are lower than the averages for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The total population Nationwide, at the time that the CSNA was conducted, was 328,239,523 with the State's total population at 8,535,519 during the same period.

The Nationwide average of Hispanic or Latino (of any race) was 18.4 % while it was 9.7 % in Virginia. The National average for White alone was 60 % while the average for the State was 61.1 %.

The National average for Black or African American alone was 12.4 % with an average of 19 % in Virginia. While the National average for American Indian and Alaska Native alone was 0.7 %, the average for the State of Virginia was 0.2%.

Asian alone Nationwide when the survey was conducted was 5.6% with Virginia exceeding that percentage with 6.6%. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone in Virginia was 0.1% compared to the National average of 0.2%.

Lastly, those who identified as having two or more races was 2.5% Nationally with the State's average being higher at 3.1%.

According to Cornell University, online disability statistics provides data on disability prevalence rates by ethnicity and disability type. As a result of the review, it was found that less than 1% of working age Asians residing in Virginia reported a visual disability while visual disabilities were reported by over 5.5% of the American Indian and Alaskan Natives who resided in the State. It was noted that Asians comprised roughly 6.5% of Virginia's population and American Indian and Alaskan Natives accounted for less than 1% of the State's population.

In the Cornell University online published disability statistics for National and State employment by disability type and ethnicity (at the time of Assessment) showed that Asians comprised the fourth largest ethnic group in Virginia (6.6% of the population) and had the highest rate of employment for those reporting a visual disability. This exceeded the rates for Whites (the State's largest ethnic group) by roughly 18%. The ethnic category of Some Other Race, non-Hispanic, had the second highest employment rate for those reporting a visual disability. Black/African Americans comprised the second largest ethnic population in Virginia and had the lowest employment rate for those reporting a visual disability.

For DBVI specifically, the data showed that White individuals constituted the largest portion of individuals served by the Agency for every year of the study, though the percentage for this group declined each year of the study. Blacks or African Americans were the second largest group served remaining at or near 39% of all consumers from Program Year (PY) 2018-2020. The rate of Asian individuals served constituted more than 6% in PY 2019 and 2020, while Hispanic individuals rose from 4.8% in PY 2017 to 5.7% in PY 2020.

The data indicated that White individuals are underrepresented in the overall DBVI population compared to their rate overall in Virginia. In addition, Hispanic individuals appeared at a rate of 4% lower than their rate in the State. African Americans were

overrepresented- in the overall DBVI population by almost 20% from their rate in Virginia overall. It should be noted that there are many factors to consider when comparing the population of DBVI consumers to Virginia's population overall including consideration of the socioeconomic status of each group. One would expect that individuals that are in greater need would constitute a higher percentage of individuals receiving assistance from the Agency.

At the time of assessment, the top three barriers to achieving employment goals were:

1. Employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
2. Not have job skills
3. Not having job search skills

The top three barriers identified by Agency partners were the same top three barriers selected for the general population.

As a result of the CSNA findings, DBVI has begun a targeted effort to reach unserved and underserved populations. These efforts include hiring more bilingual staff, attending various community cultural events to conduct outreach and inform individuals of the services that DBVI has to offer, and providing many agency documents in other languages. It is anticipated that DBVI will continue to grow its outreach to unserved and underserved populations throughout the current State Plan cycle.

C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

[text box] At the time of Assessment, it was noted that there had been considerable progress in the relationship between DBVI and the core partners at the State level since the previous CSNA. The Commissioner continues to sit on the Statewide Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services at DBVI has a primary role in bringing the core partners together and serves as staff to the SWDB. This has resulted in the development of stronger partnerships between DBVI and the other core partners. Joint planning and frequent communication continued to be common among partners. It was highlighted that DBVI plays a critical role on the SWDB in that the Agency continued to advocate for the accessibility of the American Job Centers (one-stops) and all partner programs and facilities.

As staff to the SWDB, the DBVI Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services has been invited as a core member of several one-stops recertification process and continues to provide crucial information to the recertification team regarding both physical and electronic accessibility of each location.

DBVI's sister agency, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative services (DARS), the general agency, continues to be an important workforce partner for the Agency. The crucial relationship between DARS and DBVI is necessary to provide comprehensive wraparound services for the individuals that DBVI works with who present with co-occurring disabilities. While the level of service and the productivity of the Agency's relationship was seen as sporadic depending upon staff member and Regional Office (at the time), DBVI has made a concerted effort to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor training surrounding

dual cases shared between DBVI and DARS, with an update to business practices to support those efforts and expectations of collaboration when working towards the common goal of individuals receiving and/or maintaining competitive integrated employment.

As a core partner, DBVI, continues to provide in-service training for one-stop Staff regarding the provision of DBVI services and the necessity of the availability of Center services and the braiding of funding to provide comprehensive services. DBVI anticipates continuing the increased partnership with the one-stop centers to leverage all partner services in assisting individuals with visual impairments in their desire to gain or maintain viable competitive integrated employment.

The core workforce partners in Virginia have continued the development of a common referral portal which should aid in tracking co-enrollment. However, the project is currently on hold while the portal system developers work to ensure the system becomes fully accessible. Portal modification and updates continue to be worked on and addressed to ensure that all core partners have the same access to the portal information.

D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

[text box] In the 2022 CSNA it was noted that the number of transition-age youth applying for services ranged from 73-88 in PYs 2017-2019 before dropping to 61 in PY 2020. This decrease was determined to be the result of the pandemic and the impact of school closures and the shift to remote services delivery. The average time frame for eligibility determinations for transition-age youth at DBVI decreased during the prior four-year period, ending at 38 days. This was found to be well below the established time frame of 60 days maximum in the Rehabilitation Act. All of the youth found eligible were determined to have at least a significant disability, with more than 96% having a most significant disability in PY 2020.

Since the 2022 CSNA, DBVI has continued to work on providing rapid engagement services to bring the average number of days in status to an even lower number. DBVI is committed to its Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor training efforts in support of this initiative.

Despite the pandemic, the number of students with disabilities increased from 2018-2020. In addition, the number of potentially eligible students decreased significantly during that same time period. This was determined to indicate the DBVI is maximizing the number of potentially eligible students that apply to the Vocational Rehabilitation program to become participants. Therefore, the agency has been able to charge a number of supportive services that assist students in participating in the five required services fairly evenly in terms of percentage of all services offered.

As a result of increased data collection, including labor market indicators and stated employer staffing needs throughout Virginia, DBVI has tailored the provision of Pre-

Employment Transition Services programs to focus on educating students with disabilities on the prevailing career paths related to current Virginia employer needs.

The Assessment indicated that barriers to achieving employment goals for both students and youth with disabilities were not different. Two of the three top barriers selected for DBBVI consumers in this population were also listed in the top three barriers selected for the general population. These barriers were:

1. Not having education or training
2. Not having job skills

An assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services included the following:

1. Transportation barriers from school and work. The lack of reliable transportation, specifically in the rural areas of Virginia, affects every area of the lives of youth and can have a significant impact which limits work options for this population.
2. Low Vision technology and other Assistive technology are key services for youth and students who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind. These services are critical in preparing students and youth for their chosen career and their ability to complete the essential functions of their chosen careers.
3. All five required pre-employment transition services activities have been consistently cited as being necessary for students with disabilities. One of the five required services, work-based learning experiences, were most frequently cited, however skills related to self-advocacy and soft-skills (now referred to as power skills) training were mentioned almost as frequently.
4. The Learning Independence Feeling Empowered (LIFE) summer program at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) received high praise from those who responded to the survey, as did much of the virtual training opportunities provided by VRCBVI during the pandemic and beyond.
5. DBVI has a close working relationship with the Department of Education through many facets of the programs offered. Specifically related to students with disabilities, DBVI works hand in hand with the Teachers for the Vision Impaired (TVI) Statewide to ensure services are coordinated and comprehensive. In more rural areas of the State where a school district may not have a TVI, it is found that coordination of services for students with disabilities is adversely impacted.
6. At the time of the assessment, DBVI had added Pre-ETS programs focusing on the concepts of resiliency and financial literacy. The new offerings were considered helpful, needed and a positive experience for respondents.
7. The transition from secondary to post-secondary can be a major challenge for students who have received services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504. The concept of understanding one's disability and what accommodations are necessary to ensure the student is able to access the materials is daunting when first presented. As a support for students transitioning from high school to college, DBVI's Assistive Technology services help bridge the technology gap. However, at times it was reported that the services were not delivered in a timely

manner and caused a delay at the beginning of the individuals learning process and goal attainments.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

[text box] Respondents who participated in the survey identified the top six service needs that rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet in the State:

- a. Job Training Services
- b. Assistive Technology
- c. Other transportation assistance
- d. Independent Living Skills training
- e. Adjustment to blindness training
- f. Affordable housing services

The respondents were then provided with a list of five reasons and were asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet individual's service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. The majority of respondents stated that there were not enough service providers available in areas, which infers that this item is the primary reason why services through community rehabilitation programs (CRP) were not met. The subsequent reasons cited included:

- a. Low quality of provider services
- b. Individual's barriers prevented successful interactions with providers
- c. The lack of referrals

Survey participants were also asked to identify the most important change that network or rehabilitation service providers in Virginia could make to support individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind efforts to achieve their employment goals. These changes included:

- a. Communication with the consumer and lists of options
- b. More staff and more training for staff with more in-person participation in meetings and training
- c. More training on AT and accommodations
- d. Provide training closer to southwest Virginia

Additional recurring themes from those surveyed included:

- a. The provision of training services provided to individuals by DBVI staff members
- b. The use of CRPs and other individual service providers for some services
- c. In-house service provision was the most common method of service delivery

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- d. The use of external service providers for employment services including supported employment; although infrequent
 - e. Due to the inherent in-house service provision, it was found that DBVI was not as adversely affected by the loss of external service providers due to layoffs and high turnover as some other VR programs nationally
 - f. An expressed need to develop the ability of ESOs to work with individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind. Staff respondents indicated that they would be more likely to work with ESOs for employment services if they had more knowledge and experience working with their consumers
 - g. The need to re-establish vocational evaluation services for DBVI consumers due to the lack of professional vocational evaluation services that are tailored to meet the needs of individuals with blindness or vision impairments
 - h. The need for peer mentors, especially for youth with blindness and vision impairments. Although mentors are not usually considered as a purchased service, peer mentor training programs and networks can be contractually provided or arranged for on a fee-for-services basis

In response to the feedback received from the CSNA in this area, DBVI has implemented strategies and programs aimed at lessening the gap in the use of ESO provided services. As stated earlier in the report, DBVI has established quarterly in-person training for ESO staff surrounding blindness as a disability and the anticipated interaction of the ESO and DBVI staff while collaborating to support an individual with blindness or vision impairment in their search to gain or retain competitive integrated employment. An additional focus of these trainings is to introduce ESO staff to the myriad of Assistive Technology devices that can be used on the job as well as an introduction to skills of blindness philosophy and training.

Also, DBVI has contracted with Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU RRTC) for the provision of peer mentoring services. As part of the contract, VCU RRTC is developing a replicable curriculum and resource tool kit that can be used as a framework for other ESOs to utilize when setting up peer mentoring services. DBVI is currently in the second year of the contract and great success has been reported by student participants who would otherwise not have access to mentors and peers with blindness.

(C) GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must-

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOAL AND PRIORITIES OF ANY REVISIONS; AND

[text box] During the final SRC meeting of the year, the SRC was presented sample goal language for consideration and discussion. DBVI Director of Vocational Rehabilitation outlined the suggested language and what led to the choosing of each specific goal for consideration. As a part of this review process, the SRC provided input and feedback on the suggested language, and the SRC members were unanimously in favor of adopting the amended suggested goal language for inclusion in the Combined State Plan 2024-2027 cycle.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING AND OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT-

A. Support innovation and expansion activities

B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

[text box: List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority.]

[text box response] DBVI and the SRC agreed to the following 6 goals for the 2024-2027 cycle of the combined state plan. The goals were developed following the review of the latest CSNA, understanding areas of improvement that DBVI needs to focus on, and past input from the SRC regarding what they would like to see and continue to receive updates on moving forward. Please see the following agreed upon goals:

1. Engage and collaborate with WIOA core partners to coordinate business service efforts to include the blind and visually impaired labor market.

During the latest CSNA, it was shown that while DBVI has made great strides in increasing the partnership with other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) title partners, it was indicated that DBVI should continue these efforts into the future. DBVI has a dedicated Business Relations Unit who have worked tirelessly to bridge the gap between the career seekers DBVI works with and businesses. To that end, the Business Relations Unit has also begun to provide Windmills disability awareness training to title partners across the Commonwealth. In this next cycle, DBVI will continue working with the WIOA core partners to not only coordinate business service efforts, but also to inform employees of the talented

and quality pipeline of career seekers who are ready to join or rejoin the workforce. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- An increase of the number of career seekers co-enrolled with WIOA core partners
 - The ability/availability for collaboration to braid funding to provide wrap-around services for the individuals DBVI works with, shown by an increase of co-enrollment reporting supported by DBVI's case management system.
2. Provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services, including rehabilitation technology services, to students with disabilities, youth in transition, and adults resulting in the attainment of industry recognized credentials to obtain competitive integrated employment.

DBVI has a robust and industry recognized Assistive Technology Department that assists individuals with the appropriate equipment to meet their unique needs related to their chosen vocational goal. While DBVI strives to provide the highest quality of services, there have been instances, as noted in the latest CSNA, where individuals did not feel they received the services and necessary assistive technology to move forward confidently in working to achieve their desired level of employment. DBVI is dedicated to reducing the response time to address any such delays and continues to work hand in hand with case managers to ensure individual's needs are not only met, but that the individual can appropriately and functionally utilize the Assistive Technology for its intended purpose. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- The utilization of reporting mechanisms through the DBVI case management system
 - Feedback from individuals regarding their experiences.
3. Conduct outreach efforts to Local Education Agencies and other Community Partners to assist in increasing the number of students with disabilities participating in and benefiting from DBVI offered Pre-Employment Transition programs.

DBVI continues to provide robust and meaningful programming related to the Pre-ETS 5 required activities as set forth in WIOA. One area of improvement is DBVI's outreach to local education agencies and other community partners to inform them about the services available to students with disabilities. In response to this area, DBVI has recently hired an additional staff member to assist in focusing on outreach to the stated audiences. Historically, DBVI has relied on the TVI to let the students and their parents know about the programming and services available to them while still in High School. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

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- An increase in the number of new contacts related to Pre-ETS services
 - An Increase in participation numbers related to Pre-ETS programming
 - The increased use of resources to provide support and programming to the DBVI Pre-ETS population statewide.
4. Continue to expand the utilization of Supported Employment and Customized Employment services for adults and youth to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

As noted in the most recent CSNA, DBVI has historically underutilized the provision of Supported Employment for both youth and adults with disabilities. Many factors contribute to this, including case manager lack of understanding of supported employment services and how to leverage ESO assistance in supporting an individual who is blind, vision impaired, or deafblind on the job. As stated earlier in this report, there has been found to be a lack of trained and qualified ESO staff to address the specific needs of individuals who have blindness. DBVI is committed to providing increased training for both case managers and ESO staff on the provision of supported employment services and how to fully support an individual with vision impairment on the job. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- Increased use of supported employment services and funding to provide the necessary support for the individual to maintain appropriate competitive integrated employment related to their chosen vocational goal.
 - Measured through reporting mechanisms available in the DBVI case management system
5. Achieving agency annual performance goals for the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

DBVI strives to remain a good workforce core partner by providing services that lead to achievement of goals related to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance. Dedicated DBVI staff members are continuously looking at reported measures and work to ensure that the objectives set forth are met. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- Data reporting through the DBVI case management system

- Power BI (data visualization software) reports to internally measure the number of services provided to individuals during a given quarter or performance year
 - Reports provided to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on both a quarterly and yearly basis
 - Internal controls surrounding the collection and reporting of data related to program performance.
6. Increase collaboration with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services to provide comprehensive wrap around services to address the needs of individuals who have dual diagnoses.

Virginia is fortunate to have two separate VR (Title IV) partners to provide comprehensive wrap around services for individuals with disabilities. The latest CSNA mentioned that DBVI should leverage its working relationship with the general agency to enlist expertise in disabilities other than blindness, and to collaborate as one unit on data measures that are reported as a state and not by each individual agency. Now more than ever, DBVI is recognizing the prevalence of co-occurring disabilities and should collaborate with the general agency to ensure that all of the individuals needs are met, not just needs related to blindness. DBVI has begun to implement business practices regarding the importance and availability of individuals to have a VR case open with both agencies. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- An increase in the number of reported joint cases with the general agency
- Documentation of the increased collaboration of DBVI and the general agency's executive leadership teams to address statewide reporting concerns and remediation of any concerns that would prevent the state from meeting our combined efforts and reporting requirements.

(D) EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS.

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe-

1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;

[text box: List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies]

[text box] The following goals were recommended by the DBVI SRC for the 2020-2023 combined state plan cycle:

SRC Recommendation 1- The SRC recommends DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2020-2023 state plan goals.

Progress or completion: This goal was completed as a result of DBVI providing both written and verbal reports quarterly as to the progress made towards achieving the designated state plan goals for the current plan cycle

SRC Recommendation 2- Per the feedback from individuals served by DBVI (surveys, success stories, and other anecdotal evidence), the SRC recognizes that self-advocacy skills are critical to the goal setting and thereby achievements of personal and vocational goals for transition-age youth, students and individuals of all ages. Therefore, the SRC recommends that DBVI continues to promote the importance of self-advocacy and continue to incorporate these values into its rehabilitation programs and other services.

Progress or completion: Progress was made on this goal as evidenced by DBVI ensuring incorporation of self-advocacy training as a part of all Pre-ETS programming as well as documenting vocational guidance and counseling provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and other organizations to include increased awareness of consumer organizations and their roles. Training programs at VRCBVI also include a self-advocacy component in all training modalities.

SRC Recommendation 3- The SRC recommends the following related to consumer satisfaction data.

- a. Consumer Satisfaction survey data is collected annually or on a rolling basis
- b. DBVI continues the quarterly reporting cycle whereby consumer satisfaction data and analysis are provided at each scheduled meeting.
- c. Develop strategies to increase consumer participation in consumer satisfaction surveys

Progress or completion: This goal was achieved by DBVI developing and filling a part-time consumer satisfaction employee to follow up with individuals whose cases were closed each week in an attempt both by phone and email to contact individuals to get real time survey information regarding the services they received while working with DBVI. DBVI continued to report quarterly on the consumer satisfaction survey data and responses at each scheduled meeting. DBVI elected to gather the consumer satisfaction survey data on a weekly and rolling basis with a minimum of two emails with survey links sent to the individual followed by a minimum of 3 phone calls in an attempt to allow an individual to provide feedback regarding their services. DBVI collected data from individuals whose cases were closed

following successful competitive integrated employment as well as individuals who exited the Vocational Rehabilitation Program prior to competitive integrated employment. DBVI will continue with the consumer satisfaction survey process as developed and will monitor the process to allow for any updates or changes to be made as the needs of individuals and reporting requirements change.

SRC Recommendation 4-The SRC recommends that DBVI provide the SRC with a dedicated staff person to capture notes and key action items during SRC meetings and to collaborate with SRC leadership in offering newly appointed SRC members an orientation at least once a year.

Progress or completion: This goal was achieved by the designation of a DBVI administrative team member to capture the quarterly meeting minutes and any key action items that require follow-up. This administrative team member also assists Council members in making arrangements to travel to the meeting location, assists in recording the agenda for upcoming meetings, and works in collaboration with the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services to schedule and provide meaningful orientation opportunities at least yearly to new members of the SRC. The SRC new member orientation includes an introduction to VR terms and acronyms, a brief history of DBVI and its purpose, and review of the mandate for the SRC and the inherent responsibilities assumed following Governmental appointment. DBVI will continue to provide this requested information and has adopted the recommendation as a best practice.

SRC Recommendation 5- The SRC recommends the following as it pertains to providing opportunities for public comment.

- a. DBVI continues to conduct regional public meetings with regional or state meetings of consumer organizations during the State Plan cycle and share the public comments and agency responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting
- b. DBVI continues to provide notification of all public meetings to include regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly SRC meetings to the DBVI website and the designated channel for Virginia on Newsline. In addition, the SRC recommends that DBVI provide notification of the quarterly SR meetings to students enrolled in VRCBVI.

Progress or completion: The goal was achieved by DBVI's continued willingness to continue to provide a full report of public comments and the agency's responses on the official DBVI website as well as emailing an electronic copy to SRC members annually and continued posts on Newsline. DBVI remained committed to conducting a minimum of four public meetings (by in-person gatherings and virtual gatherings of stakeholders). At least three of those

opportunities are conducted in conjunction with consumer group organizations meetings. All public meetings are advertised on the official DBVI website as well as the official social media pages and Virginia Town Hall so that all interested parties and stakeholders are sufficiently notified of upcoming opportunities to comment. DBVI continues to be open to receiving public comment at any time throughout the year in writing, and stakeholders are advised of this additional opportunity. DBVI is committed to continuing to offer as a best practice.

SRC Recommendation 6- In the interest of providing the best possible customer support to consumers receiving workforce placement services from Virginia DBVI field services, the SRC recommends DBVI place emphasis on training DBVI counselors on Job Development (Entrepreneurship or building relationships with local employees); Job Placement; as well as an overview of Job Coaching and effectively working with Employment Service Organizations. Recommend counselors continue working closely with the DBVI Business Relations Unit to ensure they have the most up-to-date information to assist clients with job placement. The SRC further recommends DBVI report on these efforts at each scheduled SRC meeting (a minimum of four times each year).

Progress/Completion: Throughout the most recent state plan cycle, DBVI has remained committed to providing training to staff, enhancing the counselor relationship with the Business Relations Unit, and providing comprehensive job placement efforts by working with community partners. Each year, DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors attend a scheduled Vocational Rehabilitation Training each month. The topics for the trainings are chosen based on Counselor feedback, reporting trends, and any change in process or policy. DBVI is happy to have seen a large increase in the number of paid work experiences for both students and youth with disabilities but also for adult career seekers as well. This increase could not have occurred without the cooperation and collaboration of the field Counselor and the Business Relations unit. As a rule of thumb, the Business Relations Unit reports out (in-person or virtually) to both DBVI staff and SRC meetings. An update regarding business relations efforts, partnerships and job placement is provided quarterly to the SRC as recommended. DBVI is looking forward to continuing this practice during the next state plan cycle.

SRC Recommendation 7- DBVI develop and distribute various marketing materials for individuals in the community, including business and potentially eligible recipients of services. The SRC recommends that DBVI share these materials with the SRC and ensure that all materials are available in alternate format, to include large print, Braille, and electronic media. The SRC recommends that DBVI conduct targeted outreach to underserved populations.

Progress/Completion: As a commitment to ensuring that all systems and stakeholders are aware of the DBVI services that are available, DBVI has hired a Director of Communications. As part of the first tasks accomplished was consistent branding across all DBVI programs to

ensure continuity and understanding of information being received from DBVI. In addition, marketing materials have been developed and are provided in various languages (including the top 5 languages spoken in Virginia). At the time of intake, DBVI case managers confirm with the individuals being served as to what their preferred format is to receive information. This preference is documented in DBVI's case management system and allows for alternative formats such as large print, Braille, Electronic, or written communication. DBVI has participated in several community outreach events geared towards providing information to populations historically underserved by DBVI and has hired staff who are bi-lingual to help bridge the communication divide. DBVI has hired an additional Pre-ETS specialist dedicated to conducting outreach to Local Education Agencies, TVIs, Parents, and Students with Disabilities to ensure that maximum effort is provided to ensure that DBVI services and opportunities of support are known throughout the State. DBVI shared and will continue to share any new marketing material and website modernization information as they are developed.

2. REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

[text box] Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan. For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) had two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- a. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- b. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- c. Median earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- d. Credential Attainment Rate; and
- e. Measurable Skills Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, had to full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- a. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- b. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- c. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program did not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, had two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments designated the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- a. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- b. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- c. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- d. Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies were required to continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that were designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA”. The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments required VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator was measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments continued piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states were not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs were expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program was required to submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments worked with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approved a state’s plan.

States could identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and established levels of performance for each of the state indicators.

The following table shows PY 2022 and PY 2023 expected and negotiated levels of performance:

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Adjusted (SAM)	PY 2022 Actual	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	50.1%	52%	54.3%	VA 58.1% DBVI 51.4%	50.1%	53%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	47.0%	50.0%	51.45%	VA 55.7% DBVI 39.1%	47.0%	52%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3339	\$3600	\$3583	VA \$4123 DBVI \$7465	\$3339	\$3800
Credential Attainment Rate	71.2%	89.0%	47.8%	VA 61.3% DBVI 49.3%	42.2%	45%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.2%	89.0%	Not assessed	VA 87.7% DBVI 93.3%	71.2%	89.1%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹			Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹ "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is being reported statewide for the core partners and will be reported as such in the Combined State Plan for the 2024-2027 state plan cycle.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	55%		57%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	54%		56%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3909		\$4200	
Credential Attainment Rate	63%		66%	
Measurable Skill Gains	89%		91.5%	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR

INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G. SRC, SILC).

(E) SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE IV FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE IV FUNDS:

(A) [check box] VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

(B) [check box] VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under Title I.

2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE

USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

[text box] The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) uses funds received through Title IV of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, to purchase Supported Employment services (SE) for eligible individuals, including youth, who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind. DBVI purchases SE using a fee-for-services structure from a statewide network of approximately seventy approved SE vendors.

In PY 2023, 25 individuals with most significant disabilities received services through Supported Employment programs funded by Title IV. DBVI will use Title IV funds to purchase and provide SE support services for approximately 15-20 individuals each year of the state plan cycle, including youth, with most significant disabilities. Other activities will include:

1. collaborating with Employment Services Organizations (ESO's) to identify areas within the state where Supported Employment services are not available or limited and to provide consultation, training, and support for those ESO's who expand services into those areas;
2. providing consultation and training to all ESO's to enhance their ability to serve individuals who are blind, deafblind, or who have a vision impairment;
3. continuing to identify alternative funding opportunities for extended employment services.

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE I OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

[text box] DBVI will continue to reserve and expend 50% of its Title VI funds for youth up to age 25 with the most significant disabilities. DBVI's policies will allow for the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed four years and DBVI will continue to utilize other funds (non—Title VI) for SE services for youth once Title VI funds are exhausted. DBVI collaborates with eight Community Rehabilitation Providers known as Employment Services Organizations (ESO) in Virginia to arrange for and to provide Extended Services.

Once the youth has reached stability on the employment site (as agreed to between the VR counselor and the Employment Services Organization (ESO) job coach), the extended services phase begins.

Extended Services activities can include any of the following on-going support services:

- a. Any particularized assessment needed to supplement the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs;

-
- b. The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site;
 - c. Job development and placement;
 - d. Social skills training;
 - e. Regular observation or supervision of the individual;
 - f. Follow-up services such as regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;
 - g. Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;
 - h. Any other service identified in the scope of rehabilitation services described in 34 CFR part 361; and
 - i. Any service similar to the foregoing services.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 363.4(A) AND 34 CFR 361.5(C)(19)(V).

[text box] DBVI will seek to expand and enhance relationships with community partners, including both public and private programs and agencies, with the goal of leveraging additional resources in order to increase extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities in Virginia. Specifically:

1. DBVI is currently working with a larger number of individuals with multiple disabilities, in particular individuals who are blind, deafblind, or have a vision impairment and also have a mental health disability. DBVI continues to collaborate more formally with the local public mental health agencies with the goal of leveraging those entities as an additional resource.
2. DBVI has had sporadic relationships with the Veterans Administration (VA) programs across the state. DBVI will identify those VA programs that may be serving a population consistent with those individuals DBVI is currently serving as another possible resource.
3. DBVI has an established policy for jointly serving individuals who may also have (or could have) an open case with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) in Virginia, and has recently updated business practices to encourage collaboration between the two agencies. Jointly serving individuals with

multiple disabilities who require supported employment services, including shared funding of those services, will not only enhance the services to the individual but will limit costs for both agencies.

4. DBVI has been expanding the roster of potential vendors for services, including supported employment services, for individuals who are blind, deafblind, or vision impaired. The majority of these vendors are non-profit agencies, but an enhanced collaboration with them may provide access to other resources for the population DBVI serves.
5. DBVI, through the approved supported employment vendors (Employment Services Organizations – ESO's), has been able to access some Long-Term Extended Support Services (LTESS) for the population served in supported employment. DBVI has as a goal to continue increasing its utilization of these ESO's for supported employment services, and that increased utilization will mean increased LTESS funds targeted for those served by DBVI.

(F) ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

(1) **Estimates for next Federal fiscal year-

(A) VR Program; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Cost of Services using Title 1 Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Priority Category 1 Most Significantly Disabled	1550	1350	2,395,830.00	200
Priority Category 2 Significantly Disabled	1,700	1,500	75,000.00	200
Priority Category 3	1,700	1,500	0.00	200

All Others Eligible				

(B) **Supported Employment Program

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title 1 and Title IV Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Priority Category 1 Most Significantly Disabled	1350	25		1325

(G) ORDER OF SELECTION

[check box] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

[check box] The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

- VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

1. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE-

A. The justification for the order;

[text box] An Order of Selection (OOS) will be implemented when services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities who have applied for services. Individuals with the most significant disabilities will be given priority for services. At this time, DBVI does not expect to enter into an Order of Selection during the 2024-2027 stat plan cycle.

B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

[text box] **Category I: Individuals with a Most Significant Disability (MSD)**

The individual meets the definition of an individual with a significant disability and;

1. The severe vision impairment and/or any secondary disabilities, seriously limits two or more life activities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, self-direction, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of achieving an employment outcome and;
1. The individual's vocational rehabilitation must also be expected to require multiple core VR services over an extended period of time (6 months or longer).

Category II: Individuals with a Significant Disability (SD):

1. The severe vision impairment and/or any secondary disabilities, "seriously limits" one life activity (such as mobility, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, self-direction, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of achieving an employment outcome.
1. The individual's vocational rehabilitation must also require multiple core VR services over an extended period of time (minimum of six months)."

Category III: All Other Eligible Individuals

C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

[text box]

Priority Category Assignment If DBVI is operating under an Order of Selection:

The VR Counselor shall assign individuals determined eligible for VR services to the appropriate priority category and must then document the rationale for the assignment in the case record. The VR Counselor shall communicate to the individual, through appropriate modes of communication (per 34 CFR 361.57(e)), the category assignment as well as DBVI's appeal process. Only those assigned to an open category will be served.

- a. The VR Counselor must assign individuals who receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), or both, to priority Category I or II since they are presumed to have a significant disability that results in serious functional limitations in one or more areas (per 34 CFR 361.42(a)(3)). Individuals receiving SSDI survivor or family benefits are not presumed to have a significant disability because they are receiving SSA benefits under the work record and disability of another person.
- b. Individuals whose cases are in Eligible status or higher are exempt from the Order of Selection and should continue to be served. Individualized Plans

for Employment (IPE) may be developed for those individuals who were previously placed in Eligible status before the date that the category became closed. Those individuals in Service status should continue to be served under their IPE.

- c. The Order of Selection process will be implemented if DBVI cannot provide services, due to limited resources, to all individuals who are eligible for VR services.
- d. The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services will provide written notification to all regional offices regarding the category and date to implement or discontinue the Order of Selection.
- e. The Order of Selection does not apply to individuals who have already been determined eligible prior to the priority category they are in closing, or to individuals in Service status.
- f. Applications for VR services will be accepted without restrictions. All applicants will receive the necessary assessment services to determine eligibility and will receive assistance in locating services available from other sources, including services available through Virginia's workforce development services system.
- g. In the event that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals in a given category, a waiting list (also referred to as Delayed Status) based upon the date of application for VR services will be used within a category.
- h. If an individual who is eligible for VR services does not meet the criteria for the category(ies) being served (i.e., is placed in a priority category that's not open to be served) under the Order of Selection and does not request case closure from Application, they must be accepted for services and held in a waiting status. An individual placed into this status has been determined eligible for VR services (Certificate of Eligibility completed) but cannot receive services because he or she does not meet the State agency's Order of Selection priorities.
- i. The individual should be notified via the Order of Selection letter in AWARE (DBVI's case management system)
- j. Individuals will be held in the waiting status until
 1. the priority category they are in is fully opened (all individuals in a specific priority category or categories become open to be served as of a date specified),
 2. the priority category they are in is partially opened (all individuals in a specific priority category within a defined date range by application date become open to be served as of a date specified),
 3. the individual requests their VR case be closed.

Individuals who are on the waiting list due to an order of selection and are closed prior to receiving services should be closed as "Other."

An individual determined to be eligible for VR services may appeal their priority category assignment in accordance with the agency's standard appeal procedures. If DBVI should open a priority category, or partially open a priority category, the VR Counselor should communicate with those individuals on their caseload who are on the waiting list and would be impacted by this change. The individual should be notified through appropriate modes of communication to include as appropriate by mail, electronic mail and/or telephone to best ensure the individual has been fully informed of the opening of their category.

2. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

[check box] Yes

[check box] No

(H) WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable"

[text box] not applicable

(I) COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purpose of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING-

(A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

(B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

(C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors. **

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 years
Senior Regional Manager	2	2	2
Regional Manager	4	4	4
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	16	17	19
Rehabilitation Teachers	20	20	20
Education Services Coordinator	5	6	8
Orientation and Mobility Instructors	8	10	10
Rehabilitation and Technology Specialists	3	4	4
Administrators, Program Directors, Data and Program Analysts	20	20	20
Regional Office Administrative Staff	16	16	16
Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services	1	1	1
Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives	1	1	1
Business Relations Specialists	4	5	5
VRCBVI: Instructors, Orientation and Mobility Specialists,	39	40	40

Access Technology Specialists, Health Educator, Administrative Support Staff, drivers, dorm staff			
VRCBVI: Administrators	3	3	3

*(D) Ratio of Qualified VR Counselors to clients: [text box] 1:70 currently; in PY2024 expected ratio is 1:60***

*(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: [text box] 1347***

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Virginia Commonwealth University	Masters of Science in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	111	46

(B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel. Which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

[text box] Virginia is fortunate to have one accredited school offering a degree program in vocational rehabilitation. The degree program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The VCU Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling prepares students for the CRC certification upon graduation.

DBVI has adopted, as a minimum standard, the educational standards established by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) and supports counselors in becoming CRCs. For the past 19 years, nearly all of DBVI's VR Counselors and Regional Managers have met the CRCC education standards.

If there are no applicants meeting the educational standards adopted by DBVI for VR Counseling positions, DBVI will consider a second tier of applicants that have completed a significant amount of their coursework towards a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or closely related field and will complete their program within one year of their hire date. This type of position is developed as a Counselor Trainee position with expectations of movement to Rehabilitation Counselor within 6 months of graduation.

DBVI maintains a Personnel Policies Handbook containing procedures for recruiting, advertising, screening applications, interviewing, hiring decisions, and applicant notification. DBVI specifically emphasizes advertising geared to attract qualified minorities, females, and individuals with disabilities.

DBVI supports recruiting and hiring qualified blind individuals to provide rehabilitation services. DBVI provides job announcements directly to consumer groups, *Newsline*, the National Federation of the Blind, and the American Council of the Blind central offices. To attract minorities to rehabilitation careers, DBVI collaborates with historically black colleges and universities for recruitment. Additionally, DBVI provides or sponsors VR staff training to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity.

DBVI sponsors eligible blind, vision impaired, or deafblind individuals attending any of the Commonwealth of Virginia's four historically black colleges and universities: Hampton University in Hampton, Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia State University in Petersburg, and Virginia Union University in Richmond. DBVI maintains contact with these schools through service provision to eligible individuals receiving VR services, VR Counselors, the Human Resources office, and other agency staff. DBVI will continue to expand its outreach activities with these colleges and universities.

(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professional and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

[text box] The personnel standard that is used to comply with the qualified personnel requirement of the Rehabilitation Act is that prospective VR counselors are required to possess a master's or doctoral degree in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, law, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, management, public administration, or another field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related field.

DBVI VR Counselors are required to hold a master's degree as previously noted. If new hires do not possess the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential, they are expected to obtain the credential within 12 months of hire and to maintain the credential while employed.

In 2024-2027, DBVI will continue several key workforce training activities focusing on improving services and developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with individuals receiving services. DBVI planning for training in this area includes:

- analyses of the changing workforce
- analyses of demographic information and agency staffing
- assessment of future needs
- determination of gaps between current and future staffing needs
- enhancing Workforce Development activities including continuing to establish relationships with businesses
- utilizing Career Pathways opportunities in Virginia

3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING-

(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

(B) The establishment and maintenance of education experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

[text box] DBVI will reimburse VR Counselors, Rehabilitation Teachers, O&M specialists, and Education Coordinators for fees required to obtain and maintain certification.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

[text box] DBVI ensures that staff and individuals who apply for or are eligible for VR services who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind and/or have other disabilities or have limited English speaking abilities are provided with accommodations to address appropriate modes of communication. Examples include, but are not limited to, interpreters, use of electronic media, braille, and translators to facilitate communication; DBVI purchases interpreter and translator services at the local level as needed.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA).

[text box] VR Counselors routinely partner with students, their families, and teachers to ensure eligible students aged 14 to 21 receive vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

In response to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), DBVI's Education Coordinators provide support and technical assistance at the local level to children and students, their parents, school division administrators, and itinerant teachers for the visually impaired. The goal is to further students' involvement in academics and extracurricular school activities.

DBVI has five Education Coordinator positions located in Regional Offices. Education Coordinators have graduate-level training and when appropriate, participate with VR staff in joint training initiatives per DBVI's Personnel Development Plan.

Cooperation, Collaboration, and Coordination (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

(J) COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act-

(1) DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

[text box] DBVI maintains collaborative relationships with state and local education officials. Interagency partnering includes developing and implementing cooperative agreements with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) and each local school division that identify plans, policies, and procedures.

These annual agreements facilitate the transition of blind, vision impaired, or deafblind students from school to the receipt of VR services for eligible students, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students and the financial obligations of each agency.

Additionally, the agreements establish collaboration and coordination efforts to help blind, vision impaired, or deafblind students fully participate in school. DBVI has implemented pre-

employment transition services and includes these services in all planning, policies, procedures, and agreements in the cooperative agreement cycle.

The cooperative agreement between DBVI and DOE identifies each agency's respective and joint responsibilities. DOE is the lead agency assuring eligible students with disabilities receive free appropriate public education, while DBVI prepares and delivers a program of special education services in addition to those provided in the public school system. DBVI works with students who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and school systems to plan and provide services to students.

Transition services are delivered to youth with a disability. A Youth with a Disability means individual with a disability who:

- is not younger than 14 years of age; and
- is not older than 24 years of age.

Pre-Employment Transition Services are delivered to students who are at least 14 years of age but less than 22 years of age. The age range for pre-employment transition Services was agreed upon with and aligns with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services age range for pre-employment transition services.

(2) DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 CFR 361.22(B), PROVIDE AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

(A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;

(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of reach agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

(D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

[text box] This state-level cooperative agreement specifies that DBVI:

- assists DOE staff and other facilities with developing “child find” efforts to identify and locate students who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind;
- assists DOE staff to plan for the assistive technology needs of eligible students;
- assists DOE staff in planning for Virginia’s statewide testing program;
- invites DOE staff to DBVI meetings that address major issues affecting students who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind;
- provides information and educational materials defining DBVI services and procedures;
- provides a lending service through DBVI’s Library and Resource Center (LRC) from which the School Division may borrow certain items that are appropriate for teaching students who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind; and
- provides professional development opportunities for Teachers of the Vision Impaired (TVI) on a regional basis, to include two training sessions for new teachers related to the DBVI Low Vision program and the process for ordering materials from the Library Resource Center.

Career and Technical Education Programs

AUTHORIZED UNDER THE CARL D. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT OF 2006, AS AMENDED BY THE STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (PERKINS V) (TITLE 20, UNITED STATES CODE (20 U.S.C. 2301 ET SEQ.))

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, statutory references in this section are to Pub. L. 115–224,—*The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (“Perkins V” or “the Act”). (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) The term “the State” used throughout this section refers to the State Perkins Eligible Agency and “the State Plan” refers to the “Perkins State Plan”.

(OMB Control Number: 1830-0029)

A. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES IN SECTION 122(C)(2) OF PERKINS V. SEE TEXT BOX 1 FOR THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE PLAN CONSULTATION UNDER SECTION 122(C)(1) OF PERKINS V.

Text Box 1: Statutory Requirements for State Plan Consultation

- (c) PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—The eligible agency shall—
 - (A) Develop the State plan in consultation with—
 - (i) Representatives of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs, including eligible recipients and representatives of 2-year minority serving institutions and historically Black colleges and universities and tribally controlled colleges or universities in States where such institutions are in existence, adult career and technical education providers, and charter school representatives in States where such schools are in existence, which shall include teachers, faculty, school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, career and academic guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals;
 - (ii) Interested community representatives, including parents, students, and community organizations;
 - (iii) Representatives of the State workforce development board established under section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111) (referred to in this section as the “State board”);
 - (iv) Members and representatives of special populations;
 - (v) Representatives of business and industry (including representatives of small business), which shall include representatives of industry and sector partnerships in the State, as appropriate, and representatives of labor organizations in the State;

Text Box 1: Statutory Requirements for State Plan Consultation

- (vi) Representatives of agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth, including the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths established or designated under section 722(d)(3) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(d)(3));
- (vii) Representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations located in, or providing services in, the State; and
- (viii) Individuals with disabilities; and
- (B) Consult the Governor of the State, and the heads of other State agencies with authority for career and technical education programs that are not the eligible agency, with respect to the development of the State plan.
- (2) ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES.—The eligible agency shall develop effective activities and procedures, including access to information needed to use such procedures, to allow the individuals and entities described in paragraph (1) to participate in State and local decisions that relate to development of the State plan. (3) CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNOR.—The consultation described in paragraph (1)(B) shall include meetings of officials from the eligible agency and the Governor’s office and shall occur—
 - (A) During the development of such plan; and
 - (B) Prior to submission of the plan to the Secretary.

(Section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V)

Perkins State Plan Development

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) developed its Perkins Four-Year State Plan using the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) requirements as a foundation to ensure input from a wide variety of stakeholder sources. The Four-Year Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Plan was informed by representatives from secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, which included eligible secondary and postsecondary subrecipients, with representatives of two-year minority-serving institutions, historically black colleges and universities, and adult CTE providers. Teachers, faculty, school system leaders, school administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, career and academic guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals also informed plan development. Value was added to the State Plan by the participation of interested community representatives, including parents, students, and community organizations. Representatives from the Governor’s office and from large and small business and industry also provided input to the stakeholder meeting. Intentional strategies were employed to include the voice of representatives of special populations, including individuals with disabilities and out-of-school youth, disadvantaged youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth.

Throughout this Plan, the term students with disabilities refers to students with a disability who are eligible for special education and related services, including a student who is evaluated and determined to have autism, developmental delay, emotional disability, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, or other categories which meet the federal and state regulations. The term disadvantaged refers to individuals (other than students with disabilities) who have economic or academic disadvantages, and who require special services and assistance to succeed in CTE programs, and includes individuals who are members of economically disadvantaged families, migrants, students who have limited English proficiency, and individuals who are identified as potential dropouts from secondary schools.

Virginia does not have tribally controlled colleges or universities, Indian Tribes, or Tribal organizations, nor does it have charter schools included in the local school system for Perkins funding purposes. The comprehensive list of stakeholders by name and organization can be found in Appendix A.

Virginia is fortunate to also have the WIOA Combined State Plan team that is led by the Governor and Governor's office, including the Secretary of Labor and the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD). The Secretaries of Commerce and Trade, Education, and Health and Human Resources; as well as representatives from branches under each, including Virginia Works, Virginia Employment Commission (VEC); Virginia Community College System (VCCS); Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), and Department of Social Services (VDSS) are team members. State department levels participating in the WIOA Combined State Plan development under WIOA are Title I areas of Rapid Response, Adult Education, Dislocated Workers, and Youth; Title II area of Adult Education and Literacy; Title III area of Wagner-Peyser; and, Title IV areas of Vocational Rehabilitation. The remaining Combined Plan team members are from the offices of Trade and Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, secondary, postsecondary, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Virginia's Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW).

The participation of, and input from, the wide breadth of stakeholders informing the development of the State Plans has led to a thorough connection among secondary and postsecondary education, small and large business and industries, workforce development industry sectors, and Governor-led state agencies.

2. CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 122(E)(1) OF PERKINS V, EACH ELIGIBLE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP THE PORTION OF THE STATE PLAN RELATING TO THE AMOUNT AND USES OF ANY FUNDS PROPOSED TO BE RESERVED FOR ADULT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, AND SECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE AGENCIES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 122(E)(1)(A)-(C) OF THE ACT. IF A STATE AGENCY, OTHER THAN THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY, FINDS A PORTION OF THE FINAL STATE PLAN OBJECTIONABLE, THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY MUST PROVIDE A COPY OF SUCH OBJECTIONS AND A DESCRIPTION

OF ITS RESPONSE IN THE FINAL PLAN SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY. (SECTION 122(E)(2) OF PERKINS V)

Funding split between secondary education and postsecondary education

This topic spanned across all four public hearings and emphasized the overwhelming support to continue the current secondary to postsecondary funding split of 85 percent/15 percent. Many also spoke to the need to increase the secondary to postsecondary funding split in favor of secondary to 90 percent/10 percent. The Superintendent of Lee County Public Schools spoke on behalf of the Regional Superintendent's Group that represents 19 school divisions in Southwest Virginia. The Division Superintendent's Group supports the 85 percent/15 percent split of funding because of their commitment to children. He pointed out that community colleges have a variety of other opportunities provided through industry partnerships to help with equipment needs that school divisions do not have. In closing, he advocated highly that the State Board of Education (BOE) continue to fund Perkins at the current level or increase funding for secondary education.

Several school division personnel cautioned the VDOE that reducing the secondary funding in the formula would significantly and negatively affect their divisions' ability to implement CTE with fidelity and equity, and that the VDOE must consider how secondary must divide the funding to support 358 high schools and 374 middle schools, compared to 23 community colleges. Any reduction in federal funding for secondary could result in fewer CTSO opportunities, a reduction in staff professional development, fewer equipment upgrades, and fewer credentialing opportunities.

It was also requested that the split be increased in favor of secondary to support the increased demands with special education, work-based learning (WBL), and industry credentials. Many also indicated that additional funding for secondary education is needed to fulfill the VDOE's mission to prepare students to be career, college, and life ready, a mission aligned with the VDOE's Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

Continued support for CTSOs at the secondary level

Students and advisors that participate in CTSOs presented and shared comments at each of the four public hearings throughout the Commonwealth, stressing the importance of continued funding to support CTSO opportunities. It was shared that through CTSOs, students are provided with opportunities to serve, lead, expand their skills and knowledge, and experience career planning far beyond the scope of the classroom. Continued funding to support teachers providing these experiences is vital in helping students learn to lead in a technical world.

Several personal stories of student success were shared.

- A teacher/CTSO sponsor who worked with over 50 Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) regional, state, and national officers shared her perspective: CTSO opportunities have helped students learn the importance of workplace readiness skills (WRS).

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- The national vice-president of Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) shared how participation in FCCLA has had a tremendous impact on her life, providing her with leadership skills and WRS which have helped her transition into life after high school. She shared several examples of the positive impact on her family and in her consumer science classes, and that the skills she has learned align with the State focus on the Profile of a Graduate. She encouraged an increase in support of CTSO opportunities for future generations.

Overall importance of CTE at the secondary level

Speakers from across all four public hearings gave examples of the significance of CTE at the secondary level and the importance of continued support through federal funding.

A representative from Hampton City shared that “the Academies of Hampton are transforming the high school experience.” Funding to support career exploration with programs like My Future, My Journey provide students the experience to explore all careers at the Hampton Convention Center. In Perkins V, federal funding is permissible down to grade five for expanded career exploration; this requires additional resources and supports, increasing the federal dollars needed at the secondary level. CTE is an integral experience along with CTSO opportunities, industry credentialing, professional development, resources like the CTE Resource Center (CTERC), and essential equipment for hands-on activities that are critical for student success, ensuring all students are life ready as they enter the workforce pipeline throughout the Commonwealth.

A representative from Northern Virginia shared that CTE provides opportunities like the Thinkabit Lab in Falls Church City where over 5,000 grade five through 12 students study the foundations of microelectronics, computer science and programming, and robotics. CTE courses provide the hands-on technical skills that are needed for the future workforce. Continued support of CTE at the secondary level is mission critical to meeting the workforce needs of the Commonwealth.

A parent from Prince William County shared a personal story of his son’s success as a CTE student in automotive technology. Throughout his career pathway and involvement in SkillsUSA, his son was able to compete in seven different states with students from all over the country. Based on a WBL opportunity and this classroom success, he received over \$100,000 in scholarship funding to attend a technical school; he earned a full ride to the Universal Technical Institute and then participated in the Mercedes-Benz Drive Program. Today, at 20 years old, his son is a Mercedes-Benz mechanic at Huber Mercedes-Benz in Fredericksburg, Virginia; he is self-sufficient and living on his own with a bright future thanks to the Hylton High School CTE automotive program. Any reduction in federal funding would lead to having antiquated training resources or outdated equipment, creating a more difficult transition to a technical school or the industry, thus impacting scholarship opportunities for current and future Hylton High School students.

Importance of WBL at the secondary level

Several presenters' comments were related to WBL, as Virginia highlights the importance of WBL in its Profile of a Virginia Graduate. One presenter shared, “WBL experiences provide

our students with authentic learning opportunities on a spectrum from career exploration all the way through career preparation. Perkins funding supports the opportunity for WBL to be embedded in CTE courses.”

At the public hearing in Williamsburg, a CTE staff person indicated that implementing WBL has highlighted the need for a centralized management system. Increased funding is needed to support this important component to ensure students are career ready.

Several speakers requested the funding split to be increased to 90 percent for secondary schools, in support of expanding WBL opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.

Support for private school students

Two presenters from Wytheville, Virginia shared comments representing the Minnick Private Day School.

One presenter stated that Perkins V requires states to continually make meaningful progress toward improving the performance of special populations. Private schools in Virginia serve over 4,000 students and the goal of many private day schools is to return the student to their home school. It only makes sense to assess the needs of these students and staff when determining how funds can be equitably applied, and to move the needle toward positive outcomes for this special population.

Another presenter shared that evidence-based practices for the future success of special needs students points to CTE initiatives, including vocational training, WBL, career planning, and paid and unpaid work experience. The goal is to get these students back to public school, and she believes that if they had some of these opportunities, or even one opportunity, to experience some of these programs, that would be a way to get them interested and back into public schools.

Continued support for professional development at the secondary level

One presenter shared the need for continued funding for CTE teachers to attend professional development, as it is critical in providing a level of confidence and competency as a professional educator.

Another presenter shared a concern about ensuring funding was available for all staff to remain current in their field. Some teachers are required by their industry to remain certified to maintain their teaching license. For example, students in automotive technology programs seek to earn their state inspector license and ASE certifications. Teachers in this program area are required to attend professional development training by industry to stay current to prepare students for rigorous exams; continued funding is mission critical at the secondary level.

Continued support for the CTERC

Several presenters shared the value and significance of the work at the CTERC for the past 37 years.

- About 70 percent of the funding for the CTERC comes from Perkins.

- CTERC staff support curriculum revision, development of new courses, establishment of the 17th career cluster, WBL Guide, and Safety Guide.
- The website receives two million hits per year.
- CTERC provides aligned curriculum with industry standards and ensures competencies are identified, and articulates CTE courses, industry certifications, and course sequences.

Presenters expressed that funding to support the CTERC is critical and losing it would be devastating; funding must remain to ensure Virginia's CTE curriculum keeps pace with industry and workforce needs.

Several presenters commented in favor of an increase to support the CTERC, noting any decrease in funding would severely affect the ability of the CTERC to provide free access to, and support of, the curriculum resources for all teachers.

Perkins V performance indicators

One presenter in Wytheville shared comments of concern related to the fact that science is now an additional performance measure in Perkins V. He indicated that Virginia is considering the biology SOL as a performance measure, which essentially means that CTE students' biology scores will help determine CTE program quality. He shared that he does not think CTE should be held accountable for what will come down to biology SOL scores. He urged Virginia to reconsider this measure. In addition, while he supports dual enrollment, he is not in support of making dual enrollment credits a measure of program quality.

3. DESCRIBE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC TO COMMENT IN PERSON AND IN WRITING ON THE STATE PLAN. (SECTION 122(D)(14) OF PERKINS V)

The public had the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan from February 26 – March 10, 2024. Written comments were accepted through www.virginiaworks.gov.

B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE'S VISION FOR EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

a. Provide a summary of State-supported workforce development activities (including education and training) in the State, including the degree to which the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study are aligned with and address the education and skill needs of the employers in the State identified by the State workforce development board. (Section 122(d)(1) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia has an established statewide system of career pathways that brings together elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education; workforce boards; and business and industry. These partnerships connect education, workforce development, and economic development, and the workforce development activities connect to employer needs and focus on high-skills, high-wages, or in-demand careers that relate to the economy. This statewide system allows Virginia to ensure continued improvement to its modern, relevant, and

rigorous programs, and supports students to be workforce ready upon high school graduation or with additional postsecondary education.

The Virginia Workforce Development Plan aligns the education and training pipeline to the needs of the labor market, and the pipeline of activities range from middle and high school, postsecondary, and adult education CTE programs. These priorities are reflected in recent Virginia workforce initiatives that include the identification and acceleration of a workforce that is ready to fill middle-skill jobs, and the inclusion of workforce credentials that are valued by employers and vital to the individual's career progression.

Additionally, 8VAC20-131-50 and 8VAC20-131-51, require students to earn a CTE credential approved by the BOE. The CTE credentials could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia WRS for the Commonwealth Assessment. If the CTE credential in a particular program area is not readily available, appropriate, or does not adequately measure student competency, with satisfactory completion of competency-based instruction in the program area, the student will meet the standard diploma requirements.

Virginia programs of study for career pathways provide a consistent foundation of knowledge and skills across the state with additional regional requirements added to programs, if needed. These programs of study enhance secondary and postsecondary collaboration that may lead to articulation agreements. Virginia's Economic Development Strategic Plan reinforces the Perkins' programs of study and technical skills assessment, and ensures collaborative efforts to produce results and value in the workforce system in order to meet business needs, while being responsive to long-range talent and skills forecasts as well as emerging needs. Labor market data is acquired from resources such as CTE Trailblazers at www.ctetrailblazers.org, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) at www.vec.virginia.gov, and the Census Quarterly Workforce Indicator Explorer at www.qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov.

Virginia will continue to work across agencies to establish professional development academies to help ensure a common understanding of career pathways and sector partnerships. This effort builds upon a decade of work in the Commonwealth to align education and training programs in ways that make it easier for individuals to access and complete career preparation. By pairing together sector strategies and career pathways awareness, Virginia plans to improve the relevance and effectiveness of education and training programs, leading to more positive outcomes for individuals and businesses. Through a blend of instructor-led and self-paced online courses, academies will strengthen the leadership capacity of workforce system partners and practitioners to incorporate sector partnership, career pathway strategies, and thinking as integral components in every Virginia region.

Postsecondary

According to VCCS policy, occupational/technical education programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts-persons for employment in industry, business, the professions, and government. These programs,

which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural, business, engineering, health and medical, industrial, service, and other technical and occupational fields. The curriculum is planned primarily to meet the needs for workers in the region being served by the community college, but the VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

The VCCS governs 23 colleges located on 40 campuses across the Commonwealth, with its principal objective to “provide and maintain a system of comprehensive community colleges through which appropriate educational opportunities and programs to accomplish the purposes set forth [in the Code of Virginia] shall be made available throughout the Commonwealth.” Additionally, each college in the VCCS has a local board. The purpose of each local college board is to keep the community college responsive to the needs of its service area. Each local board also monitors college programs, policies, and actions to ensure that they are within statewide policies.

These local boards also play important roles in the curriculum approval process that follows the following pathway:

1. College proposal is approved by an institutional curriculum advisory committee
2. The proposal is reviewed and approved by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO)
3. The proposal is reviewed and approved by local board
4. The proposal is reviewed and approved by the VCCS. The Academic and Student Affairs Council (ASAC) also serves as an advisory body on system-wide matters related to instructional programs and student services. The ASAC also provides a forum for the exchange of information and professional development activities.

All community colleges maintain a workforce development division headed by a vice president, dean, or director who is charged with analyzing and addressing business and industry’s need for a skilled workforce within the college’s local service area. These workforce leaders work collaboratively with CAO within the institution to plan, develop, and maintain occupational/technical education programs at the colleges. Curriculum advisory committees, referenced above, consist of representatives from business, industry, and labor; and aid in keeping courses and programs relevant to the workplace and providing students and faculty with relevant career entry requirements. Experiential learning through apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education, service, and project-based learning provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context. Site visits and mentoring ensure additional relevancy.

The Workforce Development Advisory Council (WDAC), comprised of college workforce leaders and decision makers, also meets regularly to discuss current needs, trends, and opportunities. The WDAC serves as an advisory body to the Chancellor on system-wide matters related to non-credit instruction/services and workforce, economic, and community development. The Council meets at least three times a year.

b. Describe the State's strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State's career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V)

Secondary

The VDOE continues to strengthen its workforce development activities in Perkins V with a wide range of partners and with a continuum of career awareness, exploration, and training opportunities.

As required by 8VAC20-131-140, each elementary, middle, and secondary school must provide for the identification of academic and career interests that support planning for career preparation for all students, including students within special populations. Beginning in the elementary school years, students explore the different occupations associated with career clusters and select areas of interest in the process of developing an academic and career plan portfolio (ACPP). In middle school, students complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway in developing a personal Academic and Career Plan (ACP). To support development of the ACP, students participate in CTE career investigations course, or school division alternative, that includes personalized planning for academic courses, WBL opportunities, industry certifications, possible independent projects, and postsecondary education plans within students' identified career pathways. In high school, students select career-related learning experiences, including courses and WBL opportunities as identified in their ACP. Students' career interests are evaluated throughout high school, and, if necessary, the ACP is re-aligned. Additionally, wherever possible and appropriate, students are encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously to meet high school graduation requirements and earn college degree credit (dual enrollment). Students are provided with various options and programs during this process, including the use of state-supported and/or commercial resources for career exploration and career readiness activities. Additionally, students receiving special education services are provided the required transition-planning process that is uniquely tailored to the students' preferences, interests, and abilities, for students to be career ready whether their transition is directly to employment or to postsecondary education or training.

The VDOE Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education continues its successful process of developing relevant and rigorous curriculum frameworks, with teacher and business and industry input, which prepare students with the academic, employability, and technical knowledge and skills to meet local, state, and global workforce needs. Further, the 21st Century WRS for the Commonwealth are the first 22 competencies of every state CTE course and provide students with vital employability skills.

Virginia offers CTE curriculum in the following 17 Career Clusters:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
- Business Management & Administration

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- Education & Training
 - Energy
 - Finance
 - Government & Public Administration
 - Health Science
 - Hospitality & Tourism
 - Human Services
 - Information Technology
 - Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
 - Manufacturing
 - Marketing
 - Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
 - Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Virginia's programs of study (plans of study) for career pathways within the 17 career clusters provide a consistent foundation of knowledge and skills, with additional regional requirements added to programs if needed. These programs of study enhance secondary and postsecondary collaboration and ensure that the CTE programs in Virginia are producing results and value in the workforce system to meet business needs for long-range talent projections and skills forecasts, as well as emerging needs.

Postsecondary

Virginia's 23 community colleges serve an estimated 400,000 people annually across the state. The opportunities provided include cutting-edge and highly demanded training and education. Over the next ten years, Virginia will need to fill 1.5 million jobs, the majority of these jobs will require postsecondary credentials – associate degrees, certifications, and licensures.

To accommodate the demand, in 2015, the VCCS developed a six-year strategic plan which focuses on one goal through 2021: Virginia's Community Colleges will lead the Commonwealth in the education of its people by tripling the number of credentials awarded for economic vitality and individual prosperity.

A committee of representatives from across the VCCS engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive process to create the six-year strategic plan for the system's 23 colleges. The committee included VCCS presidents, vice presidents, deans, faculty, staff appointed representatives, and students from across Virginia's Community Colleges. The process began with a series of town hall meetings held around Virginia to gather perspectives from the people the community colleges serve. Next, the committee examined higher education reform proposals from federal and state governments, higher education think-tank reports, national and state data about higher education trends, as well as strategic plans for other organizations. The committee also heard from national experts on higher education trends and reviewed survey data from the VCCS employees and students.

The analysis led the committee to a clear conclusion: Virginia needs its colleges to produce a dramatically higher number of meaningful postsecondary credentials to support economic

vitality. More Virginians must complete degrees, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and industry recognized certifications. Their prosperity, and that of the entire state, depends on their success.

To make this one strategic goal achievable and meaningful, Virginia's Community Colleges and the VCCS office focused efforts in five specific areas:

- Elevating Virginia's skilled workforce
- Providing educational access for all Virginians
- Reinventing the way community colleges help students succeed
- Connecting Virginia's diverse educational opportunities
- Preserving affordable college access

To further advance the strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, the VCCS seeks to further align Perkins V CTE programs with the Virginia public workforce system, including WIOA.

The mission of Virginia's public workforce system is to prepare individuals for the careers of today and tomorrow and connect businesses to a highly skilled workforce. To achieve this mission, Virginia incorporates the Career Pathways Model in the implementation of statewide workforce development programs. This model values employer engagement, customer focus, and data driven decision making in all workforce programs, and helps Virginia to maintain a workforce system that exemplifies innovation and responsiveness in an ever-changing economic landscape.

The VCCS vision of Perkins V leverages and complements WIOA and the public workforce system by supporting a statewide system of career pathway development that brings together not only state and local leaders in Perkins, but also Adult Education and high school dropout recovery programs, Department of Labor grant projects, and state funded initiatives such as the Virginia Community Colleges Institutes of Excellence that are targeted to the development and dissemination of new programs in emerging technologies.

In order to build a career pathways system that brings together a variety of workforce targeted programs, the VCCS personnel responsible for career pathways-related programming, such as Perkins, high school and adult career coaches, Middle College, PluggedIn Virginia, Department of Labor grant programs, the Career Readiness Certificate, Institutes of Excellence, and credit and non-credit workforce program, have been consolidated under a VCCS cross-functional Academic and Workforce Programs team. This team reports to the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic and Workforce Programs, and collaboratively leads and manages the VCCS career pathway initiatives.

A Career Pathways Work Group (CPWG), which includes representatives from all the agencies in Virginia responsible for workforce development programs, including the state CTE directors, as well as members from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Governor's office, was established in 2013. The CPWG ensures integrated career pathways programming that is responsive to regional business demands. Members meet in

small and large groups to address specific projects, grant opportunities, and shared programming and outcomes. The CPWG has established a statewide definition of a career pathways system, funded regional career pathways grants, and provided ongoing advice and recommendations to the Virginia Board for Workforce Development.

The VCCS postsecondary Perkins funding helped to create the development of a career-coaching program. Currently, Perkins partially supports 135 coaches, who are community college employees, serving 185 high schools statewide. Perkins funds have also supported career coach training in the following areas:

- Increased nontraditional gender career awareness, participation, and completion among high school students (via professional development seminars and training)
- Improved technological capabilities for case management and student tracking (Virginia Wizard Case Management System)
- Supported professional development for the Coordinator for Postsecondary Pathways/Program Director - High School Career Coach Program to attend the National Career Pathways Conference in Orlando to earn the Career Pathways Leadership Certification and glean CTE topical and pedagogical best practices

The career coaching program's success and growth has garnered significant funding from public and private entities and has spurred an expansion of coaching across colleges and divisions for adults, veterans, at-risk students, and foster youth.

The VCCS continues to provide fiscal support from Perkins for high school career coaches and, in 2014, launched the Rural Virginia Horseshoe Initiative, designed to improve educational attainment rates in rural Virginia. The initiative continues to prioritize the strategy to increase the number and impact of career coaches in high schools served by the 14 rural Virginia Community Colleges. Approximately 40 percent of career coaches now occupy full-time positions, and full-time coaches primarily serve rural secondary students.

In addition to the career coaches, the VCCS will employ Perkins funding to support high quality CTE instruction, ongoing and targeted professional development for CTE instructors, and collaborative initiatives with both the VDOE and other agencies that lead to stronger CTE outcomes in the Commonwealth.

c. Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including the core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(2)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 122(d)(3) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia is submitting its Perkins V Four-Year State Plan as part of the WIOA State Plan. Virginia's WIOA Plan and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan informs

Virginia's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. These plans, along with this Perkins V Four-Year State Plan, align to establish a foundation that prepares an educated and skilled workforce in Virginia.

The ESSA Consolidated State Plan identifies Virginia's rigorous accountability Board-approved benchmarks in reading and mathematics as the long-term goals for all students and student groups. For over 20 years, Virginia has implemented a state accountability system that includes rigorous state content standards and assessments for all students that are updated on a regular basis. These benchmarks differentiate and identify schools for support and improvement, and also place federal accountability focus on student groups that have historically failed to meet growth targets. This gap-closing model is rigorous and attainable and emphasizes the importance of improved achievement for low-performing student groups.

Postsecondary

Virginia's CTE programs of study and workforce development system serve many of the same under and unemployed Virginians. Consequently, the Commonwealth seeks to coordinate efforts to most effectively leverage and utilize resources, and to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in this document. Representatives from all eight agencies in the Commonwealth with responsibility for workforce development, including the VDOE and the VCCS, have been meeting regularly over the past several months to ensure that the activities to be carried out under Perkins and WIOA are aligned and, where appropriate, integrated.

The VCCS is the State agency responsible for the administration of both postsecondary Perkins and the WIOA, Title I. Consequently, staff responsible for WIOA planning and implementation regularly meet and plan programming with the VCCS staff responsible for college programs, including Perkins. Having oversight of both postsecondary Perkins and WIOA provides the VCCS with the unique opportunity to ensure that the two programs align; many conversations and shared planning are conducted within the central office, colleges, and local workforce areas focused on program alignment. One example of shared planning and programming is the planning and implementation of the G3 ("Get Skilled, Get a Job, and Give Back") workforce development program, the signature workforce development program under Governor Ralph Northam's administration. In preparation for G3, the VCCS, under the Governor's direction, allocated just over \$5 million in WIOA state set-aside funds to support colleges in their redesign of targeted, high-demand CTE programs. This redesign resulted in the overhaul of nearly 500 college CTE programs that lead to applied associate degrees in fields such as healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology (IT). The new programming is broken into smaller, stackable, credential programs that are fully aligned and sequential. Students may enter level one, earn a credential of value, and then become employed – returning later to engage in levels two and three, which are seamlessly aligned in an articulated pathway toward an associate degree. This new approach to stackable CTE programming is scheduled to be implemented in FY 2021 after a significant budget proposal from the Governor to support G3 as Virginia's "Promise Program" for the colleges.

Middle College and Great Expectations are two additional programs serving current and aspiring CTE students. Middle College allows individuals without a high school degree to

increase their income and employability by simultaneously pursuing a GED, community college education, and a workforce certification in a college environment. The Great Expectations program supports current or former foster youth who are seeking postsecondary education, but who often lack the resources and support to be successful. Frequently, Great Expectations youth access the Middle College program, and both programs recruit individuals who are eligible under WIOA adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs. Both programs also offer targeted remedial courses, access to workforce readiness courses, wraparound support services, scholarships, incentives, enrollment in community college courses applicable to a degree or industry-based certificate, and comprehensive support services.

The representation of both secondary and postsecondary Perkins on the state's CPWG also ensures regular communication and coordination among Perkins and WIOA program leaders. Finally, the VBWD's work plan has specific activities related to the alignment of secondary and postsecondary Perkins with activities carried out under Title I of WIOA.

The VCCS also employs the following strategies for joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's CTE programs/programs of study with the State's workforce development system to improve and enhance career pathway access and opportunities for students, and to leverage funds between Perkins V and WIOA programs:

- VDOE: The VCCS and the VDOE have an extensive history of cooperative and collaborative work with the state's WIOA partners to provide a coordinated and comprehensive programmatic and funding approach for educational and workforce services.
- Virginia's WIOA One-stop centers, known in Virginia as Career Works: One-stop centers are part of Virginia Career Works network, and postsecondary Perkins is a mandated partner in the centers. As a required one-stop partner under WIOA, the VCCS continues coordinated efforts with the VEC on the delivery of services to Virginia's employers and job seekers offered at Virginia Career Works. One-stop centers were developed to bring together employment and training program services that work with all people and make it easier for job seekers and employers to use these services.

The Virginia Career Works network maintains a list of Virginia Career Works Centers with access to workforce and employment and training services through various programs and partner organizations. All Career Works Centers provide services required by federal legislation plus programs and services from nonprofit and other community partners that coordinate to meet the needs of the local community.

- Virginia's WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: Under WIOA Title I - Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, and the Youth Program, the Virginia Career Work Centers provide educational youth services that include: tutoring, study skills training, evidence-based dropout prevention and/recovery services, alternative secondary school services, financial literacy, and education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupations or occupational clusters. These activities include summer employment opportunities directly linked to

academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education, occupational skills training, and entrepreneurial skills training. Resources delivered include, but are not limited to: job openings, labor market data, resume training, education services, online learning, veterans' services, and youth services.

As a partner program that provides access through Virginia's Career Works system, postsecondary Perkins will continue to partner and coordinate service delivery efforts with WIOA Titles I, II, III, and IV.

d. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for each of the purposes under section 124(a) of the Act. See Text Box 2 for the required uses of State leadership funds under section 124(a) of Perkins V. (Section 122(d)(7) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia will use its State Leadership funds to:

- Develop, revise, or procure CTE curricula that are aligned to industry and academic standards, including funding for the CTERC
- Evaluate and improve regional technical centers
- Provide professional learning experiences for CTE teachers, faculty, and administrators
- Review CTE Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNA) and Perkins applications
- Review Perkins local allocation and local use
- Monitor CTE programs of study
- Recruit and prepare CTE teachers, faculty, and specialized instructional support personnel or paraprofessionals
- Market and highlight CTE programs of study, including CTE stigma/perception and marketing
- Support state-supported resources for career exploration and career readiness activities
- Provide support to eliminate inequities in student access to high-quality CTE programs of study and hire effective teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals
- Prepare students for nontraditional fields in current and emerging professions
- Develop strategies to improve success in CTE programs of study for members of special populations
- Provide funding to CTE programs that serve individuals in State institutions
- Deliver technical assistance for eligible recipients

- Support the integration of employability skills into CTE programs of study
- Support CTSOs
- Support career exploration curriculum through Fifth Grade

Postsecondary

The VCCS uses State Leadership funds to support development and implementation of strategies to improve CTE throughout the community college system. These activities include:

- Preparation for nontraditional fields in current and emerging professions, programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations that result in postsecondary certificates and nationally-recognized certifications (e.g. the VCCS High School Career Coach Coordinator provides professional development and assistance to High School career coaches)
- Support for recruiting, preparing, training, and retaining CTE instructors, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, professional development, or leadership development programs (e.g., the VCCS's annual Hire Ed Conference is a gathering of community college leaders, workforce development professionals, partner agencies, board members, and elected officials exploring the ways in which colleges will respond to the needs of businesses and individuals in the Commonwealth, positioning Virginia as a national model for workforce training)
- Provision of technical assistance to Perkins eligible recipients and reporting on the effectiveness of funding (e.g., on-site monitoring activities, data collection, and provision of related technical assistance)

2. IMPLEMENTING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY

a. Describe the career and technical education programs or programs of study that will be supported, developed, or improved at the State level, including descriptions of the programs of study to be developed at the State level and made available for adoption by eligible recipients.

(Section 122(d)(4)(A) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia's CTE program provides a statewide system of career pathways that brings together secondary, postsecondary, workforce development, and business/industry. These partnerships focus on high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations that strengthen the economy. Utilizing a statewide career clusters model, the state ensures delivery of modern, rigorous, and flexible programs that offer global competitiveness. In both secondary and postsecondary, obtainment of workforce credentials such as industry certification, a state

licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or for the Commonwealth WRS Assessment is a priority.

Sample programs of study have been developed for each of the 17 career clusters based on models provided by Advance CTE. The programs of study provide a consistent foundation of core knowledge and skills for statewide implementation. Additional competencies may be added to address regional and local workforce demands.

School divisions are required to develop at least one new program of study each year or revise an existing program of study based on the courses offered within their schools, employment needs of the area, and postsecondary career options. We provide sample programs of study and templates for the following career clusters and pathways:

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

- Agribusiness Systems
- Animal Systems
- Environmental Service Systems
- Food Products & Processing Systems
- Natural Resources Systems
- Plant Systems
- Power, Structural & Technical Systems
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Architecture & Construction

- Construction
- Design / Pre-Construction
- Maintenance Operations
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Arts, A/V Technology & Communications

- Audio / Video Technology and Film
- Journalism & Broadcasting
- Performing Arts
- Printing Technology
- Telecommunications
- Visual Arts

-
- Visual Arts (Interior Design Sample)
 - Blank Plan of Study (with fields)
 - Business Management & Administration
 - Administrative Support
 - Business Information Management
 - General Management
 - Human Resources Management
 - Operations Management
 - Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Education & Training

- Administration & Administrative Support
- Professional Support Services
- Teaching and Training
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Energy

- Fuels Production
- Power Generation
- Energy Transmission, Distribution, and Storage
- Energy Sustainability and Efficiency

Finance

- Accounting
- Banking Services
- Business Finance
- Insurance
- Securities & Investments
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Government & Public Administration

- Foreign Service
- Governance

-
- National Security
 - Planning
 - Public Management & Administration
 - Regulation
 - Revenue & Taxation
 - Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Health Science

- Biotechnology Research & Development
- Diagnostic Services
- Health Informatics
- Support Services
- Therapeutic Services
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Hospitality & Tourism

- Lodging
- Recreation, Amusements & Attractions
- Restaurants and Food / Beverage Services
- Travel & Tourism
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Human Services

- Consumer Services
- Counseling & Mental Health Services
- Early Childhood Development & Services
- Family & Community Services
- Personal Care Services
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Information Technology

- Information Support & Services
- Network Systems

-
- Programming & Software Development
 - Web & Digital Communications
 - Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security

- Correction Services
- Emergency & Fire Management Services
- Law Enforcement Services
- Legal Services
- Security & Protective Services
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Manufacturing

- Health, Safety & Environmental Assurance
- Logistics Inventory Control
- Maintenance, Installation & Repair
- Manufacturing Production Process Development
- Production
- Quality Assurance
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Marketing

- Marketing Communications
- Marketing Management
- Marketing Research
- Merchandising
- Professional Sales
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

- Engineering & Technology
- Science & Math
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

- Facility & Mobile Equipment Maintenance
- Health, Safety & Environmental Management
- Logistics Planning and Management Services
- Sales & Service
- Transportation Operations
- Transportation Systems / Infrastructure Planning, Management & Regulation
- Warehousing & Distribution Center Operations
- Blank Plan of Study (with fields)

Virginia's CTE programs and courses are described on the CTERC [website](#).. The links below point to the state-approved courses designed for career connections and career clusters.

- Career Connections
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Energy
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

The Virginia BOE requires that students complete a minimum of two sequential courses to be a program finisher. Once the student graduates, the designation is changed to program completer.

For the postsecondary section of the program of study, Virginia's template provides the recommended certificate programs and associate degree programs using a VCCS state code for the degree program (degree requirements are available on the website of each community college). School divisions and postsecondary institutions work together to identify specific courses to ensure secondary to postsecondary program alignment.

This sample Information Technology Program of Student was developed jointly between secondary and postsecondary education. The alignment of academic and technical courses moving from high school to postsecondary provides a career pathway for students interested in the IT field.

The 2019 Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 2008 and Senate Bill 1348, which require the VDOE, in consultation with representatives from pertinent industries such as renewable energy, natural gas, nuclear energy, coal, and oil, to establish an energy career cluster. The two bills also require the VDOE to base the knowledge and skill sets contained in such energy career cluster on the energy industry competency and credential models developed by the Center for Energy Workforce Development in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor. The bills further require the VDOE to report to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health no later than December 1, 2019, on its progress toward establishing such energy career cluster.

Postsecondary

The VCCS is comprised of 23 community colleges located on 40 campuses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each community college provides programs and majors through the associate-degree level, encompassing occupational-technical education, college transfer education, general education, developmental education, continuing education, and workforce development. The VCCS provides access to quality higher educational opportunities and workforce training throughout the Commonwealth for over 225,000 credit students and nearly 175,000 non-credit students. The VCCS's mission is to provide the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened.

Each community college serves a defined service region and is charged with meeting the needs of the students and industry partners in these regions while working collaboratively with secondary education, colleges and universities, and community organizations. All occupational and technical education programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts persons. These programs may include preparation for agriculture, business, engineering, healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, building and construction trades, and public safety. Curricula primarily meet the need for workers in the region being served by the community college, but the VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

Each community college maintains a CTE Advisory Committee comprised of college students, college faculty, labor organizations, workforce investment council members, business and industry leaders, local school division representatives, community representatives, special populations representation, out of school, homeless, and/or at-risk youth individuals to provide input and guidance pertaining to the scope and sequence of programs and courses to meet regional workforce demands.

The following provides postsecondary program titles, by category, offered by the VCCS. Detailed information regarding program availability, associated courses, and the college(s) offering each credential is readily available on the VCCS website.

Associate of Arts

Humanities/Humanistic Studies

- LIBERAL ARTS

Visual and Performing Arts, General

- FINE ARTS
- MUSIC

Associate of Arts and Sciences

Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies

- ARTS & SCIENCES
- BUSINESS ADMIN
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- GENERAL STUDIES
- LIBERAL ARTS
- SCIENCE

Associate of Applied Arts Non-transfer, applied degree. Visual and Performing Arts, General

- MUSIC

Visual and Performing Arts, Other

- FINE ARTS
- STUDIO & VISUAL COMMUNICATION
- STUDIO ARTS

Associate of Applied Science

Non-transfer, applied technology degree Accounting and Related Services, Other

- ACCOUNTING

Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician

- AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY

Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions, Other

- HEALTH SCIENCES

Applied Horticulture/Horticultural Operations, General

- HORTICULTURE

Architectural Technology/Technician

- ARCHITECTURE

Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician

- AUTOMOTIVE

Biology Technician/Biotechnology Laboratory Technician

- BIOTECHNOLOGY

Business Operations Support and Secretarial Services, Other

- ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TECH
- COMPUTER SOFTWARE SPECIALIST

Business/Managerial Operations, Other

- ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT
- MANAGEMENT
- MARKETING

CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician

- COMPUTER AIDED DRAFTING & DESIGN

Child Care Provider/Assistant

- EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Civil Engineering Technology/Technician

- CIVIL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician

- MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY

Computer and Information Sciences, General

- INFORMATION SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY
- IST: NETWORKING

Computer and Information Systems Security

- CYBERSECURITY

Construction Trades, General

- CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT TECH

Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General

- CULINARY ARTS

Corrections

- CORRECTIONS SCIENCE

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration

- ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE
- POLICE SCIENCE

Dental Hygiene/Hygienist

- DENTAL HYGIENE

Design and Visual Communications, General

- COMMUNICATION DESIGN
- COMPUTER ARTS
- GRAPHIC DESIGN

Diagnostic Medical Sonography/Sonographer and Ultrasound Technician

- DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY

Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician

- DIESEL TECHNOLOGY

Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering Technology/Technician

- COMPUTER ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY
- COMPUTER NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY
- ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Electrician

-
- ELECTRICAL TECHNOLOGY
 - ELECTROMECHANICAL CONTROL

Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)

- EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Engineering Technology, General

- ARCHITECT CIVIL ENGINEER
- GENERAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other

- ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

Fire Science/Firefighting

- FIRE SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY

Forensic Science and Technology

- FORENSIC SCIENCE

Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General

- FUNERAL SERVICE

Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician

- HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician (HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)

- AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION

Hospitality Administration/Management, General

- HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Industrial Electronics Technology/Technician

- ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY
- INSTRUMENTATION

Industrial Production Technologies/Technicians, Other

- COMPUTER INTEGRATED MANUFACTURING
- INDUSTRIAL
- INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

Industrial Technology/Technician

- TECHNICAL STUDIES

Interior Design

- INTERIOR DESIGN

Legal Assistant/Paralegal

- PARALEGAL STUDIES

Manufacturing Technology/Technician

- MECHATRONICS

Mechanical Engineering Related Technologies/Technicians, Other

- MECHANICAL DESIGN
- MECHANICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Mechanics and Repairers, General

- MARITIME TECHNOLOGIES

Medical Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiation Therapist

- RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Other

- HUMAN SERVICES

Mining Technology/Technician

- ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Natural Resources/Conservation, General

- ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
- FOREST SCIENCE
- FORESTRY

Nursing

- NURSING

Occupational Therapist Assistant

- OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

Opticianry/Ophthalmic Dispensing Optician

- OPTICIANRY

Photography

- PHOTOGRAPHY

Physical Therapist Assistant

- PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

Precision Metal Working, Other

- MACHINE TECHNOLOGY

Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer

- RADIOGRAPHY

Respiratory Care Therapy/Therapist

- RESPIRATORY THERAPY

Sign Language Interpretation and Translation

- AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE – ENGLISH INTERPRETATION

Teacher Assistant/Aide

- EDUCATION ASSISTING

Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant

- VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY

Associate of Fine Arts

Art/Art Studies, General

- VISUAL ARTS

Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts, General

- THEATER

Film/Cinema Studies

- CINEMA

Music, General

- MUSIC

Associate of Science

Biological and Physical Sciences

- SCIENCE

Business Administration and Management, General

-
- BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Computer Science

- COMPUTER SCIENCE

Criminal Justice/Safety Studies

- CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Education, General

- EDUCATION

Engineering, General

- ENGINEERING

General Studies

- GENERAL STUDIES

Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General

- HEALTH SCIENCES

Information Technology

- INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Social Sciences, General

- SOCIAL SCIENCES

Certificate

A curriculum that consists of a minimum of 30 semester hours with a minimum of 15 percent of course work in general education which must include one three credit hour English class.

Accounting and Related Services, Other

- ACCOUNTING
- BOOKKEEPING

Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician

- POWER PLANT MAINTENANCE

Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician

- AIRFRAME MAINTENANCE

Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions, Other

- ADVANCED HEALTH CARE

- HEALTH SCIENCES

Applied Horticulture/Horticultural Operations, General

- SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

Architectural Drafting and Architectural CAD/CADD

- ARCHITECTURAL DRAFTING

Audiovisual Communications Technologies/Technicians, Other

- MUSIC RECORDING TECHNOLOGY

Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician

- AUTOMOTIVE DIAGNOSIS AND TECHNOLOGY

- AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Business Operations Support and Secretarial Services, Other

- ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY

- CLERICAL STUDIES

- MICROCOMPUTER OFFICE AUTOMATION

- OFFICE INFORMATION PROCESS

- OFFICE SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY

- WORD PROCESSING

Business/Managerial Operations, Other

- ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT

- GENERAL BUSINESS

- MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

- SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

- SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT

CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician

- COMPUTER AIDED DRAFTING & DESIGN

Child Care Provider/Assistant

- CHILD CARE

- EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Computer and Information Sciences, General

-
- INFORMATION SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY
 - NETWORKING APLUS

Computer and Information Systems Security

- CYBERSECURITY

Construction Trades, General

- BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General

- CULINARY ARTS

Corrections

- CORRECTIONS

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration

- ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE
- LAW ENFORCEMENT
- POLICE SCIENCE

Dental Assisting/Assistant

- DENTAL ASSISTING

Design and Visual Communications, General

- GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS
- MULTIMEDIA DESIGN

Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician

- DIESEL MECHANICS

Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering Technology/Technician

- ELEC/ELECTRONICS
- ELECTRONICS

Electrician

- ELECTRICITY

Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other

- ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

Fire Science/Firefighting

-
- FIREFIGHTING

Forensic Science and Technology

- CYBERCRIME INVESTIGATION

Health and Medical Administrative Services, Other

- HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
- MEDICAL OFFICE CLERK

Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician

- HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician
(HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)

- AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION

Hospitality Administration/Management, General

- HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Industrial Production Technologies/Technicians, Other

- INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE
- MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY
- WIND TURBINE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY

Legal Assistant/Paralegal

- LEGAL ASSISTANT

Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other

- GENERAL EDUCATION

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training

- PRACTICAL NURSING

Massage Therapy/Therapeutic Massage

- MASSOTHERAPY

Medical/Clinical Assistant

- MEDICAL ASSISTING

Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Other

- HUMAN SERVICES

Precision Metal Working, Other

- COMPUTER NUMERIC CONTROLS MACHINING
- MACHINE SHOP
- MACHINE TOOL OPERATIONS
- PRECISION MACHINING TECHNOLOGY

Security and Protective Services, Other

- FORENSIC SCIENCE

Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling

- SUBSTANCE ABUSE REHABILITATION

Surgical Technology/Technologist

- SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY

Technical and Business Writing

- PROFESSIONAL WRITING FOR BUSINESS

Visual and Performing Arts, Other

- ARTS AND CRAFTS
- FINE ARTS

Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design

- WEB DESIGN MANAGER

Welding Technology/Welder

- PIPE WELDING
- WELDING

A two-year curriculum with an emphasis in a career/technical area with a minimum of 15 percent of course work in general education, which must include one three credit hour English class.

Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician

- AUTOMOTIVE ANALYSIS & REPAIR

Construction Trades, General

- CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

Electrical/Electronics Maintenance and Repair Technology, Other

- ELECTRONICS SERVICE

Graphic Communications, General

- PRINTING

Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician (HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)

- AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION

Industrial Electronics Technology/Technician

- ELECTRICAL ELECTRONICS

Precision Metal Working, Other

- MACHINE OPERATIONS
- MACHINE SHOP
- MACHINE TOOL
- MACHINE TOOL AND QUALITY

Welding Technology/Welder

- WELDING

In addition to the programs provided in the summary table, each college delivers Career Studies Certificates to meet targeted, regional workforce needs. A Career Studies Certificate program is defined as a program of study of not less than nine or more than 29 semester credit hours, and which is not required to include general education courses. Information regarding Career Studies Certificates provided by colleges may be accessed through the VCCS courses and programs portal.

The VCCS Complete 2021 strategic plan, adopted in 2015, established the goal of leading the Commonwealth in the education of its citizens by tripling the number of credentials awarded by 2021. During the 2016 session, the General Assembly passed HB 66 which established the New Economy Workforce Grant Program. This grant program, the first of its kind, provides a pay-for-performance model for funding noncredit workforce training that leads to a credential in an in-demand field. Branded as FastForward in 2017, total program enrollments have resulted in more than 18,000 industry-recognized, high-demand industry certifications and licensures.

In 2018, in accordance with the VCCS strategic plan, additional strategies were developed to support meeting the goal set forth in the plan – implementing guided career pathways – and prioritizing partnerships with K-12 that result in accelerated pathways to the workforce. For example, community colleges work with regional K-12 partners to create and expand dual enrollment opportunities supported by high school career coaches, which provide students with transparent and efficient pathways for those interested in attaining industry certifications, career studies certificates, certificates, and degrees. These models provide seamless connections between K-12, the VCCS, and businesses by providing access to clearly

articulated and affordable pathways. All of these aforementioned efforts contribute to the VCCS's emphasis placed on the Guided Pathways model.

Guided Pathways represents the thoughtful consideration of internal and external factors that influence Virginia's college communities and the creation of a systemic approach to addressing those factors in the interest of student success. Guided Pathways are designed to guide students from connection through completion. In a Guided Pathways approach, incoming students are given support to clarify goals for college and careers, choose a program of study, and develop an academic plan with predictable schedules. Embedded advising, progress tracking, and feedback are integrated into pathways leading to successful transfer or entry into the labor market.

Despite these efforts and advances, Virginia still faces significant demand for a skilled workforce, and in many industry sectors, such as IT and computer science, demand exceeds the supply. An analysis of Virginia labor market data shows that Virginia needs a strong mixture of short credentials and associate degrees to meet job demands. The VCCS is undertaking a curriculum redesign initiative to build accelerated pathways into the workforce by creating stackable pathways that begin with short-term certificates and industry certifications. With stackable pathways, students can enroll in short-term skills-based programs, off-ramp to good entry-level jobs, and continue or return later to complete credits toward additional credentials. In fall 2018, the Governor provided \$5.1 million from the WIOA state set-aside funds to jump start the accelerated pathways redesign. Each community college was awarded funding to restructure programs leading to high demand jobs in the following industry sectors: IT/computer science, healthcare, manufacturing and trades, public safety, and early childhood education.

b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways (see Text Box 3 for the statutory definition of career pathways under section 3(8) of Perkins V), including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 1321¹ will—

i. Promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;

Secondary

The goals for education in Virginia are to ensure that every student attends a school that maximizes his or her potential and prepares the student for life beyond high school. A successful graduate will achieve and apply academic and technical knowledge; demonstrate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors; build connections and value interactions with others as a responsible and responsive citizen; and, align knowledge, skill, and personal interests with career opportunities.

Under the new accreditation system implemented in 2018, every school must develop a multi-year plan to support continuous improvement. The new accreditation system emphasizes closing achievement gaps between student groups and provides a more comprehensive view of quality. The accreditation reforms align to Profile of a Virginia

Graduate, focus on equity outcomes, include student growth, and measure student engagement.

School Quality Profiles were developed by the BOE in response to the 2015 Virginia General Assembly, which directed the Board to redesign online reports for schools and school divisions to more effectively communicate to parents and the public about the status and achievements of Virginia's public schools. School Quality Profiles are available for all schools, school divisions, and for the state.

Among such items as assessments, college and career readiness, and teacher quality, the School Quality Profile also tracks the number of CTE completers by state, division, and school; and, the number of industry certifications, state licensures, and occupational competency assessments passed by CTE students. All students are held to the same rigorous content requirements and high performance on the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments for graduation.

To promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment local school divisions must submit at least one program of study each year. The components of the program of study include:

- Incorporate secondary education and postsecondary courses aligned to industry standards.
- Include coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that align secondary education with postsecondary education to adequately prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education.
- Include the opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits.
- Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

The programs of study will be utilized to strengthen career assessment activities at the middle school level, provide opportunities for students to prepare for industry certifications/credentials and a high school diploma, provide students and parents information on careers, and encourage students to seek a higher level of academic achievement.

Virginia will continue to reinforce high academic achievement for secondary students and provide postsecondary connections through program initiatives such as High Schools That Work, State Scholars Initiative (Commonwealth Scholars Initiative), dual enrollment courses, and validated course credits through which high school students may earn college credits in escrow through satisfactory performance on a certification or licensure examination or end of program or course assessment commonly administered at both secondary and postsecondary levels.

Postsecondary

To promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment each application is reviewed by the VCCS Office to determine whether the local program of study:

- Meets the criteria for postsecondary career pathways established by the VCCS and the VDOE
- Identifies and addresses high-skilled, high-wage, in-demand occupations
- Includes evidence of continuous program assessment and improvement
- Is based on appropriate use of anticipated funds
- Provides specific plans and use of funds to address any performance measures that the college has failed to meet in a previous year or years
- Shows evidence of business and industry involvement, including labor and workforce partners, in the development assessment of programming
- Shows evidence of involvement of the college-led, college service region Career Pathways Leadership Team
- Requires eligible recipients to agree to comply with all statements of assurances and conditions as defined by Perkins V legislation
- Provides students with strong experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry
- Ensures that students who participate in CTE programs are taught to the same challenging academic proficiencies as taught to all other students

**ii. Expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and
Secondary**

Virginia is committed to the expansion of access to CTE programs for special populations.

Each local school division must include strategies for increasing the participation of all special population groups in CTE in its Local Perkins Application. These may include staff development activities related to serving special populations, literature and resources designed to attract special populations to programs, and sharing information about program offerings in creative ways that target all special population groups. To comply with regulations from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), all school divisions must publish statements of nondiscrimination with the name and contact information for the designated person responsible for addressing complaints.

Across the Commonwealth, students who are members of special populations go through the same registration process as all other students and have equal access to all CTE programs and activities. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are many supports for students who are members of special populations, if necessary, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, to access the CTE curriculum, course competencies, and activities. Additionally, Virginia will continue to encourage students who

are members of special populations starting in elementary, through middle school and high school to enroll in CTE programs, including Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Engineering (STEM), that ultimately lead to future high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Postsecondary

All 23 local community colleges are required to submit annual accountability reports including services for special populations. Strategies incorporated by the colleges include adaptive technologies, specialized personal tutoring, facilities accessibility, and transportation options. The annual USDE OCR Methods of Administration (MOA) reviews provide the colleges with information and data to assist them in meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and all pertinent federal and state statutes prohibiting discrimination. The MOA and Perkins reviews examine all college publications and information available to the public (print and media) to ensure that underrepresented and nontraditional populations are properly included in text and illustrations, and that statements of nondiscrimination and contact information for the designated college officials are published as defined by federal and state law to potential and current students and to the public at large. The on-site reviews also ensure that services and facilities are in compliance with federally mandated standards including the Americans with Disabilities Act. All colleges maintain offices and staff designated to assist members of special populations. The VCCS provides career coaching and direction to prospective students currently enrolled at the secondary level or adults interested in resuming their education in all 23 service regions of the state. Comprehensive outreach services including high school career coaches, adult career coaches, and advanced technology coaches provide direct services in career and college planning, postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, etc.

iii. [Support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. \(Section 122\(d\)\(4\)\(B\) of Perkins V\)](#)

Secondary

Virginia's WRS for the Commonwealth are a set of personal qualities and abilities, interpersonal skills, and professional competencies identified by Virginia employers and educators as essential for employee success in the workplace. Developed and updated over the past 30 years to adapt to changing workplace trends and needs, these skills are incorporated into the curriculum of every State CTE course. They not only provide students of diverse backgrounds the opportunity to develop the personal resources they need to obtain and keep good jobs, but they also help employers by providing them with entry-level workers who are well-prepared to deal with a variety of workplace challenges. Additionally, since many students hone these skills through hands-on work experience, the decreasing labor force participation and increasing school enrollment of Virginia's teens in recent decades means that school-based workplace readiness skills programs will become an even more vital resource for CTE students in the future.

The VDOE's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, in partnership with several organizations, has been sponsoring research on workplace readiness skills in Virginia for more than 30 years. In each decade since the 1980s, hundreds of employers throughout the

Commonwealth have been interviewed or surveyed about what they believe are the most essential workplace skills for entry-level workers to possess.

Initial research conducted in the mid-1980s revealed that employers believed workplace readiness skills were at least as important as traditional academic and technical skills in promoting workplace success. Another round of research conducted from 1993 to 1997 led to the creation of Virginia's first set of 13 WRS, which were incorporated into the curriculum of every Virginia CTE course in 1998. Based on research performed from 2008 to 2011, the original list of 13 skills were updated and expanded to 21 skills, and additional curriculum and assessment resources were developed.

In 2017, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education continued Virginia's long history of data-driven evaluation of its WRS framework by requesting that the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service conduct research to identify and update the skills that are of most value to the state's many employers. The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education convened a panel of CTE administrators and educators, business and industry representatives, and curriculum development and assessment experts to review the Weldon Cooper Center recommendations and to continue the process of refining the skills. As a result of their collaborative efforts, a new set of 22 WRS for the Commonwealth was developed. These 22 WRS are embedded and taught in context in each state-approved CTE course. The refinements made to Virginia's WRS for the Commonwealth ensures that all courses have up-to-date and aligned employability skills that focus on the needs of Virginia's employers.

Postsecondary

Inclusion of employability skills is evidenced through the incorporation of input from advisory committees (comprised of relevant occupational experts and employers) that inform programs of study or career pathways regarding needed employability skills both within the colleges' immediate service region and statewide for successful program completion.

Three major initiatives help the VCCS ensure programs are aligned with critical industry demands and with industry-recognized certifications:

1. Complete 2021
2. FastForward
3. G3, tuition-free community college in workforce pathways

Each initiative has helped, and will continue to help, the VCCS substantially increase the number of awarded industry credentials preparing students for entry and advancement in high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand careers.

c. Describe how the eligible agency will—

i. Make information on approved programs of study and career pathways (including career exploration, work-based learning opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities) and guidance and advisement resources, available to students (and parents, as appropriate), representatives of secondary and postsecondary education, and special populations, and to the extent practicable, provide that information and those resources in a language students, parents, and educators can understand;

Secondary

Perkins V builds on current CTE success by maintaining a strong commitment to programs of study that were first introduced in the 2006 Perkins Act. As programs of study are developed and approved by the VDOE and the VCCS, they are posted on the VDOE website and disseminated electronically to stakeholders with responsibility for CTE.

Specifically, the information for CTE Programs of Study is disseminated through the following methods as they are developed and approved at the state level:

- CTE administrative meetings at both the secondary and postsecondary levels
- CTE administrator's listserv
- CTERC website for the approved curriculum frameworks and curriculum resources

State regulations, 8VAC20-131-140-C(1)(2), require each middle and secondary school to provide for the early identification and enrollment of students in a program with a range of educational and academic experiences related to college and career readiness in and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to prepare for a career, whether directly entering the career field or seeking postsecondary education.

Beginning with the 2018–2019 academic year:

- Each elementary, middle, and secondary school shall provide for the identification of personal interests and abilities to support planning for postsecondary opportunities and career preparation for all students. Such support shall include the provision of information regarding exploration of career cluster areas in elementary grades; and, course information and planning for college preparation programs, opportunities for educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom including internships and WBL, and the multiple pathways to college and career readiness in middle and high school grades.
- Beginning in the elementary school years, students are to explore different occupations associated with career clusters and select an area or areas of interest. Students shall begin the development of an ACPP in elementary grades to include information about interests, values such as dependability and responsibility, and skills supporting decisions about their future interests and goals. The ACPP is a repository for planning notes, class projects, interest inventory results, awards and recognitions, and other

information related to academic and career plans and preparation. The ACPP is student led and updated and revised as the student continues to plan for their future throughout school years. The information contained in the ACPP shall serve as the foundation for creating the ACP in grade seven.

In middle school, students are to complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway. To support development of the ACP, students shall complete a career investigations course selected from the CTE state-approved list, or a school division-provided alternative means of delivering the career investigations course content, provided that the alternative is equivalent in content and academic rigor. The course, or its alternative, shall address, at a minimum, planning for academic courses, WBL opportunities, completion of industry certifications, possible independent projects, and postsecondary education. The course, or its alternative, shall include demonstration of personal, professional, and technical WRS.

- Local school divisions then utilize school counselors, career counselors, and career coaches to provide information and advisement on career pathways to Virginia's high school students. Career coaches are community college employees who are based in local high schools to assist students in preparing for higher education and careers, and to increase student access to college programs and services, postsecondary faculty, and business and industry. Career coaches are based in high schools, alternative centers, Governor's schools, and combined schools in Virginia. Under Perkins V, the VCCS and VDOE will continue to expand the career coaches initiative statewide.

Postsecondary

As programs of study are developed and approved by the VDOE and the VCCS, they will be posted on the VDOE website and disseminated electronically to stakeholders such as Workforce Investment Boards with shared responsibility for CTE. Dissemination strategies include the following:

- CTE administrative meetings at both the secondary and postsecondary levels
- CTERC website for the approved curriculum frameworks and curriculum resources
- The Virginia Rural Horseshoe Initiative
- Adult, Advanced Technology, and High School career coaches
- Virginia Education Wizard (a secondary and postsecondary online college and career planning tool); and on the Virginia CTERC website in VERSO approved curriculum frameworks

The VCCS has initiated a number of strategies intended to provide members of underrepresented gender populations with introductions to career and technical career fields that they may not have considered otherwise. Colleges are offering summer camps to introduce nontraditional prospective and enrolled, undecided students to CTE opportunities such as computer coding and manufacturing for females, and healthcare careers for males among others. Additionally, several colleges have created nontraditional student support

groups. The VCCS high school, adult, and advanced technology coaches advise nontraditional students to consider career and technical opportunities and make referrals to the college CTE departments.

ii. Facilitate collaboration among eligible recipients in the development and coordination of career and technical education programs and programs of study and career pathways that include multiple entry and exit points;

Secondary

The CTE State Advisory Committee was established by the Virginia BOE in 2003 at the request of former Governor Warner. This committee is a standing committee of the Board to provide input on issues important to CTE programs and periodically makes reports to the BOE. This committee is comprised of business and industry (includes labor) leaders, professional organization leaders, and representatives from secondary and postsecondary education who are appointed by the BOE.

Virginia's CTE programs and programs of study provide a statewide system of career pathways that bring together secondary, postsecondary, workforce development, and business/industry while allowing students multiple entry and exit points throughout the process. Utilizing the statewide career clusters model, the state ensures delivery of modern, rigorous, and flexible programs that offer global competitiveness and support students to be workforce ready upon high school graduation and/or postsecondary program completion. In both secondary and postsecondary, obtainment of workforce credentials such as industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Commonwealth WRS Assessment is a priority. Secondary CTE students have the opportunity to graduate with a credential and continue to postsecondary education or go directly into the workforce. At any point during their postsecondary studies students may earn both credit and non-credit workforce credentials.

Virginia's curriculum framework documents for CTE programs/courses are developed with a statewide emphasis on competency-based education. The curriculum development process is based on industry standards, both those that are nationally recognized and those that are identified through research that is based on business and industry input. Among the procedures involved in the curriculum development process are the following:

- Formation of a state technical committee for every new or updated curriculum project
- Application of the modified Develop A Curriculum (DACUM) occupational analysis
- Validation of technical competencies by the state technical committees and by business/industry advisory groups
- Correlation of Virginia's SOL to technical competencies

Ongoing research based on new and emerging high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations and changing technology is utilized in the development and updating of curriculum.

Postsecondary

At the local level, each of the VCCS colleges maintain advisory committees for their CTE programs with representatives from business, labor, community organizations such as workforce investment boards and chambers of commerce, secondary educators, faculty, students, administrators, and special populations. Career pathways and career coaching are crucial approaches used at all colleges and serve as guiding practices for advisory committees that oversee CTE programs, courses, and related activities such as recruitment and retention. At the state level, the VCCS leaders are engaged with multiple partner agencies to promote and support CTE opportunities for special populations such as SNAP-ET, TANF, and ex-offenders. In 2018-2019, the VCCS trained more coaches using the established Virginia Career Coach training model, with more coaches having the opportunity to earn their Facilitating Career Development credential that leads to a globally-recognized Global Career Development Facilitator certification. As part of Perkins V, all colleges will conduct Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments that include input from several education, business, and community groups to assess current and future CTE needs. During a May 2019 webinar, colleges were given guidance on how to complete the assessment and possible collaborations.

iii. Use State, regional, or local labor market data to determine alignment of eligible recipients' programs of study to the needs of the State, regional, or local economy, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations identified by the State board, and to align career and technical education with such needs, as appropriate;

Secondary

Virginia values and utilizes labor market data to drive the development of statewide curriculum and approval of local CTE programs. To ensure that programs and courses offered in localities are consistent with employment demand and opportunities in the particular community/region, the local program/course approval process requires that local school divisions submit data on labor market and/or employment needs and student interest. CTE program integration of curriculum offerings is also encouraged when competencies for high-skill, high-wage, in-demand, and emerging careers require skill development from two or more concentrations (e.g., advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity). Labor market data is secured from such resources as [CTE Trailblazers](#), the [VEC](#), and the [Census Quarterly Workforce Indicator Explorer](#). School divisions must submit a CTE New Program/Course Application for review and approval of all new courses.

Postsecondary

According to the VCCS policy, occupational/technical education programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts-persons for employment in industry, business, the professions, and government. These programs, which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural, business, engineering, health and medical, industrial, service, and other technical and occupational fields. The curricula are planned primarily to meet the needs for workers in the region being served by the community college, but the VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

All community colleges also maintain a workforce development division headed by a vice president, dean, or director who is charged with analyzing and addressing business and industry's needs for a skilled workforce within the college's local service area. These workforce leaders work collaboratively with CAO within the institution to plan, develop, and maintain occupational/technical education programs at the colleges. Curriculum advisory committees consisting of representatives from business, industry, and labor, aid colleges in keeping courses and programs relevant to the workplace, signaling regional demand for skilled workers, and providing students and faculty with guidance regarding career entry requirements.

The VCCS also uses data provided by the VEC, the U.S. Department of Labor, the USDE, Advance CTE, and local workforce boards, as well as its own collected data to help determine CTE course and program priorities, and to identify colleges in need of technical assistance.

iv. Ensure equal access to approved career and technical education programs of study and activities assisted under this Act for special populations;

Secondary

Virginia is committed to equal access to CTE programs for students who are members of special populations across the state and recognizes the need to actively recruit these students to enroll in all CTE programs. The VDOE and local school divisions strive to continuously improve strategies to reach and recruit students who are members of special populations starting in elementary school and continuing through high school for all CTE programs. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are supports for students who are members of special populations, if necessary, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, to access the CTE curriculum, course competencies, and activities.

To overcome barriers, including those based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age, the VDOE requires each local application for Perkins funds to sign an assurance statement that the local applicant will ensure equal opportunities for all eligible students, faculty, and other program beneficiaries in any project or activity in which such funds are used. Further, the VDOE requires each local applicant to complete Schedule 4 of the Local Plan and Budget (submitted in the Perkins Local Application to the VDOE) that will address how they will ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted by addressing the special needs of students, faculty, and other program beneficiaries, to overcome barriers to equitable participation. Finally, the VDOE will sign an assurance that all applications for Perkins funds will be reviewed to ensure that the above requirements are met.

The VDOE also conducts MOA CTE Civil Rights Reviews and CTE Federal Program Monitoring Reviews which help ensure students who are members of special populations are provided equal access to CTE programs. The CTE Civil Rights and the CTE Federal Program Monitoring reviews include an extensive examination of the school division's data, policies, and procedures; interviews with central office administrators, school administrators, school staff, and students; and, walk-throughs of CTE classrooms and laboratories to assess building accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Postsecondary

The VCCS has taken the following steps to increase access and success of special population students:

- Review and revise, as needed, current Perkins Monitoring Review questions
- Implement a specific special populations quarterly improvement plan for community colleges which have findings related to special population services as needed
- Solicit feedback from local community college administrators to identify best practices in reaching and increasing special population participation in CTE programs
- Solicit feedback in the form of a questionnaire from those who work in the student accommodations offices at all 23 colleges
- Provide additional system leadership and resources to advance best practices across the Commonwealth

v. Coordinate with the State board to support the local development of career pathways and articulate processes by which career pathways will be developed by local workforce development boards, as appropriate;

Secondary

In Virginia, though Perkins V, the VDOE will continue the work in the development of career pathways that was started in Perkins IV connecting high schools and postsecondary institutions through the identification of career pathways: programs of study. School divisions are required to document programs of study that progress from middle school through postsecondary and the programs must be signed by participating agencies.

Funds are also used for collaborative academic and CTE workshops and professional development, curriculum development, and development of CTSO scholastic and leadership activities. Program improvement is supported for new courses that address identified high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand jobs in Virginia.

The VDOE is also developing, in collaboration with multiple agencies including workforce development, online courses related to sector partnerships and career pathways to enhance and support the workforce needs throughout the Commonwealth.

The VDOE staff continually reviews the CTE programs activities, including courses for secondary instructors, leadership training, integrated academic/CTE instructional activities, recognition of best practices and programs of excellence, joint student leadership training for CTSO officers, and transitional programs and instructional strategies for special populations.

Postsecondary

According to the VCCS policy, colleges generally originate curriculum. There must be ample justification for the creation of new curriculum based upon the needs and opportunities of a region served by the college. In determining the curriculum to be offered, the VCCS evaluates the varying needs of the communities served throughout the Commonwealth and the

substantiated requests of interested local governing bodies, employers, and individuals. The VCCS policy Section 5, Educational Programs, defines all requirements for new programs to include local college, local College Board, and VCCS approval.

All CTE programs are subject to accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and, therefore, must include both technical and academic education. The VCCS Policy Manual provides stringent policies and guidelines to ensure a balance of core academic as well as career and technical knowledge and skills in CTE programs of study. Colleges must also continuously assess instruction and courses according to the requirements stipulated by the VCCS.

vi. Support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers to provide students with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry, which may include work-based learning such as internships, mentorships, simulated work environments, and other hands-on or inquiry-based learning activities; and

Secondary

In Virginia, all state curriculum for CTE courses include a required unit on all aspects of industry to provide students with a strong experience in and understanding of these occupational specific competencies. This unit is linked to instructional resources that focus on the work associated with career clusters and career pathways.

During 2013-2014, a strategic review of WBL was conducted to reassess and revitalize experiential learning opportunities offered to Virginia's CTE students. The results redefined WBL methods and provided flexibility to school divisions with eight options in three categories, ranging from career-exploration to prep-professional to career-preparation. The WBL resources are available at www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte/hqwbl.

The 2019 General Assembly House Bill 2018 and Senate Bill 1434 required the BOE to review and revise, in consultation with certain stakeholders and no later than December 1, 2019, its CTE Work-Based Learning Guide to expand the opportunities available for students to earn credit for graduation through high-quality WBL experiences such as job shadowing, mentorships, internships, and externships.

During 2018-2019, a technical review of WBL was conducted to expand experiential learning opportunities offered to students. The results increased the number of opportunities for school divisions, adding three new WBL methods for a total of eleven options in three categories: job shadowing, mentorship, school-based enterprise, externship, entrepreneurship, internship, service learning, clinical experience, cooperative education, youth registered apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship. The newly revised *Work-Based Learning Guide* will be effective July 1, 2020. A convening of business leaders and educators with defined focus on the WBL methods of instruction, best practices, and current trends is conducted annually. The goal is for each CTE student to participate in at least one WBL experience during secondary education.

Postsecondary

Effective and meaningful collaboration among secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers is essential to the development of an appropriately skilled workforce. This focus can be appreciated through review of required student learning expressed in the VDOE Profile of a Virginia Graduate, which was updated in May 2019. The profile describes four overlapping areas for student learning and achievement considered essential to success beyond high school. These are:

- **Content Knowledge:** Knowledge of subject areas based on state-wide standards and their application
- **Workplace Skills:** Demonstration of personal skills and behaviors required for productivity, effective relationships, and problem-solving within one's workplace
- **Community and Civic Responsibility:** Understanding of the opportunities within civic organizations for service, and decision-making and responsibility for respectful interaction with others
- **Career Exploration:** Individual participation in career exploration, planning, and preparation, based on understanding of personal interests, skills, and abilities, and the needs of the economy

Virginia's Community Colleges are committed to working with secondary educators to help advance these goals and to supporting seamless transitions to postsecondary CTE programs.

The VCCS provides a variety of programs to foster collaboration with and support for employers, incumbent workers, and the emerging workforce. Non-credit programs are delivered via open enrollment programs and as customized corporate training. Open enrollment programs are available to the general public and assist individuals in transitioning to employment after training. Customized corporate training programs are developed at the request of employer partners to upskill current or potential employees, providing opportunities for employee advancement and meeting the emerging needs of regional employers. Additionally, Virginia's credit and non-credit career and academic pathways are designed to provide meaningful and rigorous opportunities that incorporate workplace and citizenship skills through internships, externships, credentialing, and blended learning.

The VCCS also established a Director of Career Education Programs and Workforce Partnerships, and organized staff around these priorities, to support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, community colleges, and employers to help ensure students are provided with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of industry. Successful WBL and apprenticeship models already exist throughout the VCCS and expanding these opportunities is a system priority. Current program examples include the delivery of related technical instruction for apprentices and employer sponsors in the shipbuilding, ship repair, mechatronics, asphalt, and information technology industries. These programs will serve as a foundation as the VCCS seeks to expand WBL opportunities to offer these experiences to a larger percentage of students and employer partners. Significant opportunities exist for collaboration between secondary and postsecondary in this effort as this is a shared priority.

Through its programs of study, the VCCS contributes to Virginia's distinguished record as one of the best states for education, employment, and growth in the disciplines of STEM. Virginia's strong education pipeline and business friendly climate, help support an economy that employs hundreds of thousands of Virginians in STEM fields. Additionally, Virginia is expected to add nearly 150,000 new STEM jobs in the next five years, with opportunities expected to grow for years to come.

The STEM education pipeline has not evolved as quickly as economic demand and educational inequities often limit access to advanced courses in STEM disciplines, credentials, and WBL for many of the most vulnerable and underrepresented students. To close those achievement opportunity gaps, meet the growing economic demands for STEM-prepared employees, and maintain its recognition as one of the best states for STEM education and employment, Virginia's Governor established a STEM Commission and charged the Commission with creating a unified vision and adopting a set of dynamic shared goals to strategically prepare students for STEM jobs of the future. Key representatives from the VCCS and the VDOE serve on this committee to help ensure alignment.

The State STEM Plan requires collaboration from a wide range of state and local stakeholders, with early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, out-of-school programs, informal education, workforce development, environmental education, and business and industry partners from every region of the state. Through collaboration with stakeholders, the VCCS contributes to shared goals on several initiatives including renewed emphasis on CTE career pathways through the expansion of CTE dual enrollment offerings, and opportunities to align state-level WBL efforts benefiting students and business and industry partners.

vii. Improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators, including those who are members of special populations. (Section 122(d)(4)(C) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Enhancing student learning and achievement is the goal of the Virginia BOE's efforts to improve public education. The BOE has revised its accreditation standards to provide a more comprehensive view of school quality while encouraging continuous improvement for all schools and placing increased emphasis on closing achievement gaps. The Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (8 VAC 20-131) places emphasis on raising achievement standards for all students. The revised accreditation standards measure performance on multiple school-quality indicators, not just on overall student achievement on state tests. At the high school level, this includes indicators for college, career, and civic readiness.

School divisions are required to meet or exceed the Virginia Agreed upon Performance Levels for the Perkins Core Indicators of Performance. The actual performance of the school division is recorded in each school division's Annual Performance Report (APR). In addition, performance data for all special populations is included in the analysis of data. If an indicator is not met, the school division must provide an explanation and the actions taken to improve the performance indicator. Once the school division has met the state standards, they must maintain or show improvement each year. School divisions, in their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, must disaggregate and analyze data to identify achievement gaps and

ensure that students who are members of special populations have equitable access and success in all CTE programs.

Postsecondary

The VCCS will continue to utilize CTE performance indicator data to drive student learning outcome improvement. If performance does not meet state-approved minimum levels, the VCCS will work with the local colleges on improvement plans. These improvement plans may address specific targeted supports including: tutoring, academic remediation, and specialized support for members of special populations. The VCCS will also offer technical assistance aimed at improving student performance and outcomes and will also promote student academic achievement by supporting local community college efforts to develop, expand, and improve comprehensive student support systems.

The VCCS data suggests that there are opportunity and achievement gaps that persist, for example, between students of color and white students, and students with and without disabilities. The VCCS will continue to seek and develop effective strategies to address these disparities. To continue its promotion and support for nontraditional CTE participation, the VCCS will also assess the feasibility of developing a plan to evaluate and, if appropriate, implement a Program Improvement Process for Equity (PIPE). The PIPE, developed by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Education Foundation (NAPEEF), is a data-driven, decision-making institutional change process that focuses on increasing participation, completion, and transition of underrepresented groups in nontraditional CTE programs.

d. Describe how the eligible agency, if it opts to do so, will include the opportunity for secondary school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, or competency-based education. (Section 122(d)(4)(D) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia provides secondary school students the opportunity to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, and competency-based education.

Community college and school division partnerships identify a common set of foundation courses that could simultaneously serve as 11th and 12th grade dual enrollment courses, youth apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and more.

Virginia's Early College Scholars program allows eligible high school students to earn at least 15 hours of transferable college credit while completing the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma. The result is a more productive senior year and a substantial reduction in college tuition. Students earning a college degree in seven semesters instead of eight can save an average of \$5,000 in expenses.

To qualify for the Early College Scholars program, a student must:

- Have a "B" average or better
- Be pursuing an Advanced Studies Diploma

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- Take and complete college-level course work (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, or dual enrollment) that will earn at least 15 transferable college credits

Early College Scholars are supported by Virtual Virginia which provides statewide access to college-level courses. The Commonwealth College Course Collaborative defines the subjects high school students can complete and receive college degree credit from participating public and private colleges and universities.

Competency-based education has been an active component in Virginia's CTE programs since the mid-1970s. The curriculum development process is based on industry standards, both those that are nationally recognized and those that are identified through research that is based on business and industry input. Among the procedures involved in the curriculum development process are the following:

- Formation of a state technical committee for every new or updated curriculum revision project
- Application of the modified DACUM occupational analysis
- Validation of technical competencies by the state technical committees and by business/industry advisory committees
- Correlation of Virginia's SOL to technical competencies

Ongoing research based on new and emerging high-skill, high-wage, in-demand occupations and changing technology is utilized in the development and revision of curriculum.

Postsecondary

Secondary students may earn VCCS college credits through dual enrollment, thereby increasing the portability of college credits earned through early college programs to all 23 community colleges. Dual enrollment has become the primary vehicle in Virginia of awarding early college credits in CTE program areas.

Dual enrollment affords qualified high school students in the Commonwealth the opportunity to enroll in college-level coursework while concurrently satisfying high school graduation requirements. Dual enrollment programs have many potential benefits for students, depending on their talents, intentions, and the particular postsecondary path they intend to pursue. These benefits include improving the student's ability to complete postsecondary programs efficiently, enriching educational opportunities, and preparing for future employment. To support the achievement of these goals, dual enrollment courses should:

- Provide access to postsecondary education and pathways to the workforce for qualified high school students from all backgrounds
- Expose students to rigorous coursework that familiarizes them with the academic and behavioral expectations of colleges and universities

- Contribute to the enhanced student success and quality outcomes in postsecondary education
- Afford the opportunity to reduce time to complete and cost in postsecondary education

It is the mutual responsibility of higher education institutions, secondary schools, and secondary school divisions to ensure that dual enrollment offerings enable fulfillment of the above purposes according to students' interests, abilities, and aspirations.

e. Describe how the eligible agency will involve parents, academic and career and technical education teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local business (including small businesses), labor organizations, and representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, as appropriate, in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its career and technical education programs. (Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia stakeholders include parents, academic and CTE teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local business (including small businesses), and labor organizations in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its CTE programs. All the above-named stakeholders are members of the State Plan Review Committee.

The VDOE utilizes the following activities/organizations to provide continued input into the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of CTE programs.

- As a direct result of the Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA) representative serving on previous State Plan Review Committees, the VDOE will continue to engage the PTA in the development of the Perkins V Four-Year State Plan
- The CTE State Advisory Committee is a standing committee of the BOE which provides input on issues important to CTE programs. This committee is comprised of business and industry (includes labor) leaders, professional organization leaders, and representatives from secondary and postsecondary education who are appointed by the BOE.
- Local CTE Advisory Committees are required through state regulation (8VAC20-120-50). These committees serve the same purpose at the local level in advising and providing input on issues important to the local CTE programs and approving their Local Plan and Budget that is submitted for Perkins funds. These committees are comprised of the same stakeholders as the CTE State Advisory Committee but secured from the local/regional area served by the school divisions and represent the programs offered in that division/center.
- The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's regional directors planning group is composed of local CTE administrators from each of the eight superintendent's regions. This group keeps the VDOE CTE staff aware of CTE-related best practices, professional development needs, and questions arising that are best addressed at the state level.

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- The Virginia Career Education Foundation was established in 2002 by Governor Mark Warner and its fundamental missions are to raise funds and to lend support for initiatives that promote quality technical programs and raise the level of awareness for technical careers in the Commonwealth. The Foundation, a public-private partnership, supports and facilitates public-private partnerships, for it is through the combined efforts of industry, government, and educational institutions that these challenges can best be overcome. The Foundation focuses its efforts primarily on initiatives that are geared toward middle and high school students, those students for whom the future is just around the corner. Under Perkins V, the foundation will be restructured to continue to meet the needs of statewide CTE initiatives. Additional information is available at www.vcef.works.
 - The CTE State Director serves as an ex-officio member of the Virginia Association of Career and Technical Administrators (VACTEA) and the Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education (VACTE). These organizations provide opportunities for professional development, awareness of trends, and needed changes to CTE programs in Virginia.
 - Staff at the Demographics and Workforce and Center for Survey Research of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia maintains Trailblazers (formerly Career Prospects in Virginia), an online resource to help teachers, administrators, and school divisions meet Perkins requirements. In addition, this site provides useful employment projections, labor market data, and research as it is regularly updated, and manages the CTE Completer Follow-Up system.
 - In addition to coordinating program maintenance and improvement activities with the State's Perkins grant subrecipients, the VDOE staff maintains open communication with each of the CTE professional associations including the VACTE, VACTEA, Virginia Association of Agricultural Educators (VAAE), Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education-Special Needs Division (VACTE - SND), Virginia Association of Marketing Educators (VAME), Virginia Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (VATFACS), Virginia Association of Trade and Industrial Educators (VATIE), Virginia Business Education Association (VBEA), Virginia Health and Medical Sciences Education Association (VAHAMSEA), and Virginia Technology and Engineering Education Association (VTIEEA). These organizations are dedicated to expanding relevant and rigorous CTE programs and enhancing leadership among its members.

Postsecondary

At the local level, each of the VCCS colleges maintains advisory committees for their CTE programs with representatives from business, labor, community organizations such as workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, secondary educators, faculty, students, administrators, and special populations. The VCCS leadership engages with multiple partner agencies to promote and support CTE opportunities for special populations such as SNAP-ET, TANF, and ex-offenders. As part of Perkins V, all colleges will continue to conduct a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment that includes input from education, business, and community groups to assess current and future CTE needs.

f. Include a copy of the local application template that the eligible agency will require eligible recipients to submit pursuant to section 134(b) of Perkins V. See Text Box 4 for the statutory requirements for local applications under section 134(b) of Perkins V.

Secondary Template: www.cteresource.org/Perkins V/Secondary PlanFY21.xlsm

Postsecondary Template: www.cteresource.org/Perkins V/Postsecondary PlanFY21.xlsm

g. Include a copy of the comprehensive local needs assessment template and/or guidelines that the eligible agency will require of eligible recipients to meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V. See Text Box 5 for the requirements for the comprehensive local needs assessment under section 134(c) of Perkins V.

Secondary Template: www.cteresource.org/Perkins V/Secondary-CLNA.docx

Postsecondary Template: www.cteresource.org/Perkins V/Postsecondary-CLNA.docx

h. Provide the eligible agency's definition for "size, scope, and quality" that will be used to make funds available to eligible recipients pursuant to section 135(b) of Perkins V.

Secondary

The secondary definitions of "size, scope, and quality" in Virginia are:

Size:

1. A minimum of 11 courses in career and technical education is offered in each secondary school. (Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-131-100.B)

Scope:

1. At least three different career and technical education programs, not courses, that prepare students as a career and technical education completer are provided. (Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-131-100.A.1.)
2. Instruction in career and technical exploration is provided in each middle school. (Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-131-90.B)

Quality:

1. Career and technical education programs incorporated into the K through 12 curriculum that include:
 - Knowledge of careers and all types of employment opportunities including, but not limited to:
 - Apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, and small business ownership
 - The military
 - The teaching profession
 - Emphasize the advantages of completing school with marketable skills
 - Career exploration opportunities in the middle school grades

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- Competency-based career and technical education programs that integrate academic outcomes, career guidance, and job-seeking skills for all secondary students. Programs must be based upon labor market needs and student interest. Career guidance shall include counseling about available employment opportunities and placement services for students exiting school. Each school board shall develop and implement a plan to ensure compliance with the provisions of this subdivision. Such plan shall be developed with the input of area business and industry representatives and local community colleges and shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with the timelines established by federal law. (Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1.D.3.)
1. Establish the requirements for a standard and an advanced studies high school diploma, which shall each include at least one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education and one credit in United States and Virginia history. The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall, however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment. The advanced studies diploma shall be the recommended diploma for students pursuing baccalaureate study. Both the standard and the advanced studies diploma shall prepare students for postsecondary education and the career readiness required by the Commonwealth's economy... (Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:4.D.2.). Note: Requirements for graduation (effective for the students entering ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year) (8VAC 20-131-50). Requirements for graduation (effective for students who enter the ninth grade in the 2018-2019 school year) (8VAC 20-131-51).
 2. Provide for the award of verified units of credit for passing scores on industry certifications, state licensure examinations, and national occupational competency assessments approved by the BOE. School boards shall report annually to the BOE the number of Board-approved industry certifications obtained, state licensure examinations passed, national occupational competency assessments passed, for the Commonwealth Workplace Readiness Assessment passed, and the number of CTE completers who graduated. These numbers shall be reported as separate categories on the School Performance Report Card. In addition, the Board may:
 1. For the purpose of awarding verified units of credit, approve the use of additional or substitute tests for the correlated SOL assessment, such as academic achievement tests, industry certifications or state licensure examinations
 2. Permit students completing career and technical education programs designed to enable such students to pass such industry certification examinations or state licensure examinations to be awarded, upon obtaining satisfactory scores on such industry certification or licensure examinations, the appropriate verified units of credit for one or more CTE classes into which relevant SOL for various classes taught at the same level have been integrated. Such industry certification and state licensure examinations may

cover relevant SOL for various required classes and may, at the discretion of the Board, address some SOL for several required classes. (Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:4.D.12.)

Postsecondary

The postsecondary definitions of “size, scope, and quality” in Virginia are:

Size:

1. A minimum of 74 courses in CTE is offered in each local community college.

Scope:

1. At least seven different CTE programs, not courses, that prepare students as a CTE completer are provided.

Quality:

1. CTE programs incorporated into the postsecondary education curriculum that include:
 - Knowledge of careers and employment opportunities including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and small business ownership, the military, and the teaching profession, and emphasize the advantages of completing college with marketable skills
 - Career exploration opportunities
 - Competency-based career and technical education programs that integrate academic outcomes, career guidance and job-seeking skills

Programs must be based upon labor market needs and student interest. Career guidance includes counseling about available employment opportunities and placement services for students exiting school. Programs of study are developed with the input of area business and industry representatives, labor representative, and local Workforce Investment Board(s).

3. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

a. Describe the eligible agency’s program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—

i. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

1. Describe the eligible agency’s program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—

I. WILL BE PROVIDED WITH EQUAL ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES ASSISTED UNDER THIS ACT;

Secondary

Equal access to and equity in CTE programs for students who are members of special populations, as with all students, begins in the elementary school years when each student develops an ACPP that assists in identifying their future interests and goals. In middle school, students complete a career interest inventory and select a career pathway to support the

development of their ACP. In high school, students select a career-related learning experience to include in their ACP to assist in their selection of CTE courses, as well as other courses required in that program of study. Accordingly, individuals who are members of special populations go through that same registration process and have equal access to all CTE programs and activities. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are many supports for students who are members of special populations, if needed, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, curriculum and competency adjustments based on the Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plan, and instructional activities.

Virginia is committed to equity and that members of special populations are provided equal access to CTE programs. In compliance with federal regulations, the VDOE administers MOA compliance reviews to identify and eliminate any discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and disability. The identification of school divisions for an on-site CTE compliance review of civil rights requirements is determined by a targeting plan that is approved by the USDE, OCR, and is applied to school divisions in the current year of a six-year cyclical monitoring schedule. The targeting plan consists of indicators that reflect CTE student enrollments, division and school demographics, existence of a language minority community, and the division's last participation in a VDOE CTE civil rights on-site review. The CTE civil rights monitoring process includes an examination of the school division's data, policies, and procedures; interviews with central office administrators, school administrators, school staff, and students; and, walk-throughs to assess building accessibility.

The school divisions must include notices of nondiscrimination in school division and/or school student handbooks, course registration materials, major publications, and other materials that are disseminated to students and parents that states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, and if applicable, must also notify English language learners stakeholders of the nondiscrimination provisions in their language.

Postsecondary

Annual on-site MOA and Perkins monitoring help to ensure that all students are provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act. These visits include an evaluation of disability services offices and other special population related programs to ensure the success of special populations and underrepresented gender students. Questions are posed to determine the level of support, assistive technology service needs, and physical access to services. Corrective action plans are developed with guidance from a monitoring team for any findings or gaps in services. The VCCS and its local colleges must include nondiscrimination statements on all advertising and promotional materials intended for public consumption.

II. WILL NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST ON THE BASIS OF STATUS AS A MEMBER OF A SPECIAL POPULATION;

Secondary

Each local recipient shall include in the Local Plan strategies to overcome barriers that result in lowering rates of access to, and lowering success in, the programs for special populations.

These may include staff development activities related to serving special populations, literature and resources designed to attract special populations to the program, and the sharing of information about program offerings in creative ways that target all special population groups. To comply with regulations from the USDE, OCR, all school divisions and colleges must publish statements of nondiscrimination and name and contact information for designated person responsible for addressing complaints.

Local school divisions provide assurances in their local applications that discrimination against students who are members of special populations will not occur. School division must provide equal opportunities in its CTE programs without discrimination based on gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, political affiliation, veteran status, persons with disabilities, and equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Recruitment and enrollment methods must be developed and implemented by the school division to provide information and access to all students, including students who are members of special populations. Additionally, school divisions, in their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, must disaggregate and analyze data to identify achievement gaps and ensure that students who are members of special populations have equitable access and success in all CTE programs.

Postsecondary

Each eligible recipient of Perkins funding must assess access and opportunity gaps in their respective comprehensive local needs assessment. Specifically, applicants must:

1. describe progress toward implementation of equal access to high quality CTE courses and programs of study for all study
2. describe strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations

Such activities help to ensure that students are not discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population. All eligible recipients are required to comply with all award conditions including compliances with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Individuals with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.

III. WILL BE PROVIDED WITH PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ENABLE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS TO MEET OR EXCEED STATE DETERMINED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 113, AND PREPARE SPECIAL POPULATIONS FOR FURTHER LEARNING AND FOR HIGH-SKILL, HIGH-WAGE, OR IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS OR OCCUPATIONS;

Secondary

Students who are members of special populations go through the same registration process as do all students, with equal access to all CTE programs and activities. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are many supports for students who are members of special populations, if necessary, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, to access the CTE curriculum, course competencies, and activities.

Virginia also has developed Education for Employment (EFE) CTE courses for students with special needs. EFE courses are specifically designed for students with disabilities, or students identified as disadvantaged, at risk, or diverse learners to prepare them for inclusion in regular CTE programs as soon as feasible. The EFE programs are provided at various instructional levels within the middle and high schools and include WBL opportunities.

The following programs and courses are designed specifically to provide career preparation for students with special needs:

Education for Employment (EFE) course titles and codes are as follows:

Middle School Courses

- Exploratory Development (9083/36 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Exploratory Development (9031/9 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Exploratory Development (9030/6 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Exploratory Development (9032/12 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Exploratory Development (9082/18 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Exploratory Preparation (9076/36 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)
- Exploratory Preparation (9075/18 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)
- Exploratory Preparation (9021/9 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)
- Exploratory Preparation (9020/6 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)
- Exploratory Preparation (9022/12 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)

High School Courses

- Level I--Development (9085/36 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Level I--Development (9084/18 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Level I--Preparation (9077/18 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Level I--Preparation (9078/36 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)
- Level II--Development (9086/18 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Level II--Development (9087/36 weeks/for Students with Disabilities)
- Level II--Preparation (9079/18 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)
- Level II--Preparation (9080/36 weeks/for Students Identified as Disadvantaged)

In addition to the EFE courses, programs and courses designed specifically for students with special needs are available within the following program areas: agricultural education, business and information technology, career connections, and technology education. In addition, family and consumer science, health and medical sciences, marketing, and trade and

industrial education also provide for students with disabilities through their IEPs. Further, when a student with disability reaches age 14, their IEP must include services that are needed to transition to student-identified postsecondary goals. The transitional plan goals must relate to training, education, employment, and transition services, including courses of study to reach preferred occupational goal(s).

Postsecondary

Each VCCS college maintains advisory committees for their CTE programs with representatives from business, labor, community organizations such as workforce investment boards and chambers of commerce, faculty, students, administrators, and special populations. Career pathways and career coaching are crucial services used at all colleges and serve as guiding practices for advisory committees that oversee CTE programs, courses, and related activities such as recruitment and retention of special populations. At the state level, the VCCS leaders are engaged with multiple partner agencies to promote and support CTE opportunities for special populations such as SNAP-ET, TANF, and ex-offenders. Strategies utilized to ensure that members of special populations are provided with programs designed to enable them to meet or exceed state-determined levels of performance are incorporated by the colleges and include adaptive technologies, specialized personal tutoring, facilities accessibility, and addressing transportation concerns.

IV. WILL BE PROVIDED WITH APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS; AND

Secondary

Students receiving special education services or Section 504 provisions will be provided with the accommodations and/or modifications in all CTE program areas according to each student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. The CTE instructors have access to students' IEP and 504 Plans and other accommodation information that will assist them as they teach students who are members of special populations.

Postsecondary

All community colleges are required to have a designated disability services representative for students to receive assistance with the implementation and maintenance of necessary accommodations such as provisions for students with physical or emotional disabilities. Physical barriers to accessibility are addressed as part of MOA on-site reviews. All services and accommodations for special population students must be identified in the college website, student handbook, and college catalog.

V. WILL BE PROVIDED INSTRUCTION AND WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN INTEGRATED SETTINGS THAT SUPPORT COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT. (SECTION 122(D)(9) OF PERKINS V)

Secondary

Students who are members of special populations have equal access to each of the WBL experiences dependent on each student's interests, CTE program, and IEP or section 504 plan. The WBL supervisors, along with other school division staff responsible for the

oversight and coordination of work-based learning, must monitor and verify the rigor and expectations of all placements. Students within special populations participating in WBL opportunities must also meet the technical, performance, academic, and competency standards as prescribed by their program, with accommodations if included in their IEP or Section 504 plan.

The 2019 General Assembly House Bill 2018 and Senate Bill 1434 required the BOE to review and revise, in consultation with certain stakeholders and no later than December 1, 2019, its CTE Work-Based Learning Guide to expand the opportunities available for students to earn credit for graduation through high-quality WBL experiences such as job shadowing, mentorships, internships, and externships.

During 2018-2019, a technical review of WBL was conducted to expand the WBL opportunities offered to students. The results increased the number of opportunities for school divisions, adding three new WBL methods for a total of eleven options in three categories: job shadowing, mentorship, school-based enterprise, externship, entrepreneurship, internship, service learning, clinical experience, cooperative education, youth registered apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship. The newly revised *Work-Based Learning Guide* will be effective July 1, 2020. A convening of business leaders and educators with defined focus on the WBL methods of instruction, best practices, and current trends is conducted annually. The goal is for each CTE student to participate in at least one WBL experience during secondary education.

Postsecondary

The VCCS will continue working with and supporting local education agency WBL coordinators throughout Virginia. The VCCS will also seek to support, or to expand support for, innovative and accessible WBL opportunities which may include: career exploration experiences, service learning, internships, cooperative education, and apprenticeships. The WBL experiences and activities include actual paid or unpaid work experience.

j. Preparing Teachers and Faculty

i. Describe how the eligible agency will support the recruitment and preparation of teachers, including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide career and technical education instruction, leadership, and support, including professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations. (Section 122(d)(6) of Perkins V)

¹Based on the context of this requirement, the reference to the local application process under “section 132” appears to be a typographical error in the Perkins V statute. The correct section for local applications in Perkins V is section 134. Therefore, eligible agencies should respond to this item using the provisions in section 134 of Perkins V.

Secondary

The VDOE, along with the business and Industry community, places the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers and other school professionals as one of its top

priorities. Virginia uses a number of required and optional strategies and methods to achieve this objective.

In the Virginia Perkins V Local Application, each school division must indicate, for each Perkins Award Year, the number of teachers who will participate in the professional development activities, including, state conferences, institutes, or workshops (including virtual training programs); national conferences, institutes, or workshops; local conferences, institutes, or workshops; and/or internship in industry. Further, in alignment with Section 134(b)(8), each school division must describe in its Perkins Application how the school division will coordinate with the state agency and institutions of higher education to support the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel and paraprofessionals who meet applicable state certification and licensure requirements (including requirements met through alternative routes to certification), including individuals from groups underrepresented in the teaching profession. Lastly, each school division is required to describe how they will spend a portion of its allocated Perkins funds for professional development activities. Each school division must identify the career and technical activity funded, align the budgeted expense to its Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, identify the Section 134 Local Use of Funds and career and technical program area(s) funded, provide a narrative description and the budgeted fund amount.

The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education provides a Video Training Series for Administrators for new and experienced CTE administrators to provide sustained professional development on the responsibilities of the CTE administrator, identify resources, and provide timely support throughout the school year. The sessions are recorded and archived on the VDOE website.

The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education annually conducts a *New Teacher Institute*, for college credit, that is designed to help new CTE teachers design and implement effective, engaging classroom instruction. The New Teacher Institute instruction is provided on state-approved competencies and curriculum frameworks to develop lesson plans, assessments, and instructional sequences. Additionally, emphasis is placed on differentiated instruction and authentic performance-based assessments to provide tools for the new teacher for working with students in special populations. Additionally, in 2020-2021, the New Teacher Institute program will be expanded, with the expectation to double the number of participants.

The VDOE in collaboration with the VCCS sponsors Creating Excellence Awards that recognize excellence in following secondary and postsecondary categories at the local, regional, and state levels: CTE exemplary programs, advisory committees, and business and industry partnerships. This has proven to be an excellent retention strategy as well as a local, regional, and state-wide promotional event to inform the about CTE programs offered in Virginia.

The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education annually conducts Experience Works – A Convening of Business Leaders and Educators to bring together business, industry, and educators and provide focused presentations and activities on building positive WBL

experiences for CTE students throughout the Commonwealth. The targeted audience includes WBL instructors and coordinators, CTE administrators, school counselors and administrators, career coaches, and business and industry leaders. Highlights include:

- Concurrent sessions featuring best practices and establishing and developing business partnerships for the WBL instructional methods
- Career opportunities
- Strategic discussions between business leaders and educators
- A selection of industry tours in the Greater Richmond area

Postsecondary

The VCCS will continue to support and promote the recruitment and preparation of instructors, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel, and will support or provide CTE instruction, leadership, and professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations.

Perkins will continue to provide funding and resources for professional development and other activities to support the retention of qualified teaching and administrative personnel. Additionally, the VCCS will continue to partner with the VDOE to support, with Perkins leadership funds, an annual ACTE conference which serves as a statewide professional development conference for secondary and postsecondary CTE instructors, counselors, and administrators.

Within the VCCS' Academic and Workforce Programs Department are the Student Success Center and the Office of Professional Development; the goal is to support the development of faculty, staff, and administrators to achieve the mission of Virginia's Community Colleges. With more than 6,500 full-time and nearly 14,000 part-time employees across 23 colleges, the Office of Professional Development plays a vital role in supporting and preparing teachers and faculty.

C. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. DESCRIBE THE CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL APPROVE ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS FOR FUNDS UNDER THIS ACT, INCLUDING HOW—

a. Each eligible recipient will promote academic achievement;

Secondary

Local recipients' funds at both the secondary and postsecondary levels must be approved through a Local Perkins Application. All Local Applications must promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and include an analysis of local data and the alignment of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment to the expenses in its planned budget. Also, as part of Virginia's Perkins Performance Standards, local school divisions must

meet the Virginia Agreed Upon Performance Levels of the two sub-indicators for Academic Attainment, or if not, explain why it has not met the levels and describe the actions to be taken to improve performance.

Local Applications and any Improvement Plans (if required) must be received by the due date determined by the VDOE (generally April 30). All local applications are reviewed through the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA), and if necessary, detailed responses with comments and information are provided to the local school division CTE administrators. All applications must be submitted in a substantially approvable format including all application schedules, Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, at least one program of study, a CTE Federal Program Monitoring Self-Assessment (if in the six-year cohort cycle) and a completed certification and assurance signature page.

Postsecondary

Local community college recipients are required to submit annual applications for review and approval by the VCCS and the VDOE. Applications not adequately addressing all Perkins assurances and conditions are returned to the college for editing and/or rewrites. Colleges must directly demonstrate actions expected to improve performance for underachieved Perkins performance measures. Before a college recipient receives full State approval, the application goes through six levels of review. Each application will be reviewed by the VCCS to determine whether the local programs of study:

- Meet the criteria for postsecondary career pathways established by the VCCS and the VDOE
- Identify and address high-skilled, high-wage, in-demand occupations
- Include evidence of continuous program assessment and improvement
- Are based on appropriate use of anticipated funds
- Provide specific plans and use of funds to address any performance measures that the community college has failed to meet in a previous year or years
- Show evidence of business and industry involvement, including labor and workforce partners, in the development assessment of programming
- Show evidence of involvement of the college-led, college service region Career Pathways Leadership Team
- Require eligible recipients to agree to comply with all statements of assurances and conditions as defined by Perkins V legislation
- Provide students with strong experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry
- Ensure that students who participate in CTE programs are taught to the same challenging academic proficiencies as taught to all other students

b. Each eligible recipient will promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential; and

Secondary

Local recipients' funds at both the secondary and postsecondary levels must be approved through a Local Perkins Application. All Local Applications must promote continuous improvement in skill attainment achievement and include an analysis of local data and the alignment of the comprehensive local needs assessment to the expenses in its planned budget. Also, as part of Virginia Perkins Performance Standards, local school divisions must meet the Virginia Agreed Upon Performance Levels of the five sub-indicators for Technical Skills Attainment, or if not, explain why it has not met the levels and describe the actions taken to improve performance.

Beginning with first-time ninth grade students in the 2013-2014 school year, requirements for the standard diploma include a requirement to earn a CTE credential that has been approved by the Board, that could include, but is not limited to, the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the WRS for the Commonwealth Assessment. On an annual basis, the Virginia BOE reviews and approves industry, professional, or trade association certification examinations, state licensure examinations, and occupational competency assessments that will meet graduation requirements.

Further, the Virginia General Assembly also funds CTE student industry certification examinations, licensure tests, and occupational competency assessments; and, also provides funding to support industry credentialing testing materials for students and professional development for instructors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-health sciences (STEM-H) CTE programs. Each school division is provided an allocation based on its CTE student enrollment and is required to submit reimbursements to the VDOE for review and approval.

Postsecondary

As a major part of the VCCS' Complete 2021 initiative, the VCCS seeks to enable Virginians to fill 1.5 million new jobs by 2021. The majority of these jobs will require postsecondary credentials – an associate degree, certificate, certification, and licensure that are aligned with the VCCS' primary capabilities.

To accommodate the expanded demand for skilled workers, Virginia's community colleges embarked on a six-year strategic plan with the primary goal to triple the number of credentials that students earn by the year 2021 which demonstrates the effort to promote skill attainment, and especially skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.

Similarly, the FastForward program is an innovative example of how higher education and workforce systems can combine to better serve workers, employers, and regional economies. This program targets some of Virginia's most eager prospective students and focuses its efforts on closing the skills gap and filling the positions businesses across the Commonwealth demand. Additionally, FastForward helps students earn a credential and start a career.

Efforts also focus on advisors and other influencers who can become advocates of FastForward within their immediate communities and regions.

c. Each eligible recipient will ensure the local needs assessment under section 134 takes into consideration local economic and education needs, including, where appropriate, in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

Local recipients' funds at both the secondary and postsecondary levels must be approved through a Local Perkins Application. All local applications, effective with the 2019-2020 submission, were required to include a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment which included a description of how CTE programs offered by the local school division and community colleges are designed to meet local economic and education needs.

Virginia conducts ongoing research based on new and emerging high-skill, high-wage, in-demand local and regional industry sectors and occupations and changing technology which is utilized in the development and updating of curriculum.

Virginia also ensures that its CTE programs and courses are consistent with employment demand and opportunities in the particular community/region. The local program/course approval is based on labor market data secured from such resources as U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CTE Trailblazers at <http://www.ctetrailblazers.org/>, the VEC at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>, or the Census Quarterly Workforce Indicator Explorer at <http://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov>.

The local school divisions and community colleges are required to submit data on labor market, employment needs, and student interest. The CTE program integration of curriculum offerings is also encouraged when competencies for high-skill, in-demand, and emerging careers require skill development from two or more concentrations (e.g., advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity).

Virginia requires that the competencies for CTE programs be regularly reviewed and revised so that the skills that form the foundation of the curriculum:

1. Include the academic disciplines of the SOL
2. Are consistent with industry or professional standards
3. Represent application of knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning. These requirements emphasize the importance of developing both academic and technical competencies for the current and emerging workforce requirements

2. DESCRIBE HOW FUNDS RECEIVED BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY THROUGH THE ALLOTMENT MADE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE ACT WILL BE DISTRIBUTED—

a. Among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace; and

Secondary

Each eligible recipient must submit a Local Application for approval to the VDOE before receiving funds from the Perkins V. Any recipient of funds under this State Plan must submit an application covering the same period as the Transition Plan that identifies the specific requirements set forth for eligible recipients in Title I, Part C, Sections 134 and 135. The Local Application for eligible recipients must be submitted in the format provided. Each application will be reviewed by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education staff to determine whether the Local Plan:

- Promotes continuous improvement in academic achievement
- Promotes continuous improvement of technical skill attainment
- Identifies and addresses current or emerging employment opportunities, both locally and statewide
- Is based on appropriate and relevant data in view of anticipated funds
- Shows evidence of involvement of groups required to participate in the development of the plan
- Addresses requirements identified in Section 134(b) of the Perkins V, and each eligible recipient or institution agrees to comply with statements of assurance and conditions required for funding

When the review of its plan is complete, the local education agency or institution will be notified of its disposition by the Director, Operations and Accountability, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

Virginia required all local school divisions and community colleges to utilize Section 134(c)(2) to determine the status of their program and activities under the Perkins State Plan. The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, which is to be completed beginning with the Perkins local application for 2019-2020 and at least every two years thereafter, is the basis for determining areas of need for improvement and helps provide data to make decisions regarding funding in the budget schedule of the Local Application. During the Transition Year, Virginia will examine the elements of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment through school division feedback, public hearings, comment period, and the stakeholder groups when developing the subsequent State Plan (FY 2020-2023).

Postsecondary

A distribution of the Perkins State Allocation on the postsecondary level enables continued collaboration with secondary partners, community organizations, and business and industry. The distribution supports efforts that effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. These efforts include providing access to career coaches and

advisors, creating programs of study that outline a detailed map of how one successfully moves from coursework to careers, increasing stackable credentials, supporting bold program innovations, supporting WBL opportunities, and increasing opportunities for professional development for the VCCS faculty and staff.

b. Among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

Virginia does not utilize consortia within the state.

3. FOR THE UPCOMING PROGRAM YEAR, PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC DOLLAR ALLOCATIONS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY UNDER SECTION 131(A)-(E) OF THE ACT AND DESCRIBE HOW THESE ALLOCATIONS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES, AREAS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES WITHIN THE STATE. (SECTION 131(G) OF PERKINS V)

Secondary

The State Allocation under Perkins V for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 was communicated to Virginia secondary school divisions in Superintendent's Memo #123-20 May 22, 2020.

Thirty percent shall be allocated to such local educational agencies in proportion to the number of individuals in preK-12 as reported to National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), who reside in the school division served by such local education agency for the preceding fiscal year compared to the total number of such individuals who reside in the school divisions served by all local educational agencies in the state for such preceding fiscal year.

Seventy percent shall be allocated to such local education agencies in proportion to the Census Bureau's estimate of the relative number of children in poverty aged five through 17, inclusive, who reside in the school divisions served by such local educational agency compared to the total number of such individuals who reside in the school divisions served by all local education agencies in the state for the most recent Bureau of the Census' estimate.

Funds are distributed through reimbursement requests submitted via the OMEGA system for secondary, postsecondary, and institutional subrecipients. Documentation of any reimbursement claims must be retained in the school division and be available for audit in accordance with state and federal regulations governing the retention of financial records.

The table below provides the 2021-2022 allocation of funds to local school divisions (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)

LEA NO.	School Division	Entitlement Available July 1, 2021	Entitlement Available October 1, 2021	SY 2021 - 2022 Total Entitlements
001	ACCOMACK	\$61,276.27	\$87,128.35	\$148,404.62
002	ALBEMARLE	\$70,766.04	\$100,621.80	\$171,387.84
003	ALLEGHANY	\$16,837.81	\$23,941.57	\$40,779.38
004	AMELIA	\$13,586.42	\$19,318.46	\$32,904.88
005	AMHERST	\$33,502.27	\$47,636.67	\$81,138.94
006	APPOMATTOX	\$21,375.53	\$30,393.73	\$51,769.26
007	ARLINGTON	\$151,744.14	\$215,764.07	\$367,508.21
008	AUGUSTA	\$56,519.97	\$80,365.40	\$136,885.37
009	BATH	\$3,015.95	\$4,288.35	\$7,304.30
010	BEDFORD	\$64,403.15	\$91,574.45	\$155,977.60
011	BLAND	\$4,830.29	\$6,868.17	\$11,698.46
012	BOTETOURT	\$22,348.35	\$31,776.98	\$54,125.33
013	BRUNSWICK	\$21,479.69	\$30,541.85	\$52,021.54
014	BUCHANAN	\$32,445.38	\$46,133.89	\$78,579.27
015	BUCKINGHAM	\$21,876.52	\$31,106.10	\$52,982.62
016	CAMPBELL	\$53,476.25	\$76,037.56	\$129,513.81
017	CAROLINE	\$33,442.06	\$47,551.06	\$80,993.12
018	CARROLL	\$33,956.16	\$48,282.05	\$82,238.21
019	CHARLES CITY COUNTY	\$6,395.89	\$9,094.28	\$15,490.17
020	CHARLOTTE	\$23,274.16	\$33,093.39	\$56,367.55
021	CHESTERFIELD	\$305,283.07	\$434,080.13	\$739,363.20
022	CLARKE	\$9,348.21	\$13,292.17	\$22,640.38
023	CRAIG	\$5,773.69	\$8,209.58	\$13,983.27
024	CULPEPER	\$55,836.19	\$79,393.15	\$135,229.34
025	CUMBERLAND	\$13,872.80	\$19,725.65	\$33,598.45
026	DICKENSON	\$23,377.44	\$33,240.23	\$56,617.67

LEA NO.	School Division	Entitlement Available July 1, 2021	Entitlement Available October 1, 2021	SY 2021 - 2022 Total Entitlements
027	DINWIDDIE	\$30,206.72	\$42,950.76	\$73,157.48
028	ESSEX	\$14,980.28	\$21,300.36	\$36,280.64
029	FAIRFAX	\$898,879.52	\$1,278,111.33	\$2,176,990.85
030	FAUQUIER	\$49,705.52	\$70,675.97	\$120,381.49
031	FLOYD	\$17,103.72	\$24,319.67	\$41,423.39
032	FLUVANNA	\$20,376.11	\$28,972.67	\$49,348.78
033	FRANKLIN COUNTY	\$60,441.28	\$85,941.08	\$146,382.36
034	FREDERICK	\$75,932.26	\$107,967.62	\$183,899.88
035	GILES	\$18,651.31	\$26,520.18	\$45,171.49
036	GLOUCESTER	\$34,741.20	\$49,398.31	\$84,139.51
037	GOOCHLAND	\$13,616.85	\$19,361.72	\$32,978.57
038	GRAYSON	\$21,381.15	\$30,401.73	\$51,782.88
039	GREENE	\$20,783.90	\$29,552.51	\$50,336.41
040	GREENSVILLE	\$28,201.77	\$40,099.93	\$68,301.70
041	HALIFAX	\$51,944.32	\$73,859.32	\$125,803.64
042	HANOVER	\$65,702.85	\$93,422.49	\$159,125.34
043	HENRICO	\$339,147.18	\$482,231.32	\$821,378.50
044	HENRY	\$69,954.43	\$99,467.77	\$169,422.20
045	HIGHLAND	\$1,808.74	\$2,571.83	\$4,380.57
046	ISLE OF WIGHT	\$41,746.25	\$59,358.75	\$101,105.00
048	KING GEORGE	\$21,822.55	\$31,029.36	\$52,851.91
049	KING & QUEEN	\$7,402.54	\$10,525.62	\$17,928.16
050	KING WILLIAM	\$12,682.70	\$18,033.45	\$30,716.15
051	LANCASTER	\$12,479.77	\$17,744.92	\$30,224.69
052	LEE	\$45,934.97	\$65,314.66	\$111,249.63
053	LOUDOUN	\$255,877.29	\$363,830.37	\$619,707.66

LEA NO.	School Division	Entitlement Available July 1, 2021	Entitlement Available October 1, 2021	SY 2021 - 2022 Total Entitlements
054	LOUISA	\$36,309.22	\$51,627.87	\$87,937.09
055	LUNENBURG	\$18,041.72	\$25,653.42	\$43,695.14
056	MADISON	\$13,872.62	\$19,725.39	\$33,598.01
057	MATHEWS	\$7,581.83	\$10,780.57	\$18,362.40
058	MECKLENBURG	\$42,722.59	\$60,746.98	\$103,469.57
059	MIDDLESEX	\$12,313.49	\$17,508.48	\$29,821.97
060	MONTGOMERY	\$72,139.17	\$102,574.24	\$174,713.41
062	NELSON	\$15,970.22	\$22,707.95	\$38,678.17
063	NEW KENT	\$15,199.25	\$21,611.71	\$36,810.96
065	NORTHAMPTON	\$20,303.33	\$28,869.17	\$49,172.50
066	NORTHUMBERLAND	\$13,973.70	\$19,869.12	\$33,842.82
067	NOTTOWAY	\$23,423.67	\$33,305.97	\$56,729.64
068	ORANGE	\$38,358.02	\$54,541.04	\$92,899.06
069	PAGE	\$27,318.03	\$38,843.33	\$66,161.36
070	PATRICK	\$22,096.98	\$31,419.55	\$53,516.53
071	PITTSYLVANIA	\$79,902.05	\$113,612.24	\$193,514.29
072	POWHATAN	\$16,791.81	\$23,876.18	\$40,667.99
073	PRINCE EDWARD	\$28,121.68	\$39,986.05	\$68,107.73
074	PRINCE GEORGE	\$33,872.72	\$48,163.42	\$82,036.14
075	PRINCE WILLIAM	\$432,367.34	\$614,780.50	\$1,047,147.84
077	PULASKI	\$39,820.29	\$56,620.24	\$96,440.53
078	RAPPAHANNOCK	\$6,016.45	\$8,554.75	\$14,571.20
079	RICHMOND COUNTY	\$9,883.81	\$14,053.74	\$23,937.55
080	ROANOKE COUNTY	\$63,968.80	\$90,956.85	\$154,925.65
081	ROCKBRIDGE	\$25,421.23	\$36,146.29	\$61,567.52
082	ROCKINGHAM	\$78,570.01	\$111,718.21	\$190,288.22

LEA NO.	School Division	Entitlement Available July 1, 2021	Entitlement Available October 1, 2021	SY 2021 - 2022 Total Entitlements
083	RUSSELL	\$34,481.29	\$49,028.73	\$83,510.02
084	SCOTT	\$25,858.46	\$36,767.98	\$62,626.44
085	SHENANDOAH	\$48,900.97	\$69,532.00	\$118,432.97
086	SMYTH	\$41,051.74	\$58,371.23	\$99,422.97
087	SOUTHAMPTON	\$21,239.77	\$30,200.69	\$51,440.46
088	SPOTSYLVANIA	\$132,526.65	\$188,438.85	\$320,965.50
089	STAFFORD	\$124,526.86	\$177,063.98	\$301,590.84
090	SURRY	\$6,705.16	\$9,534.03	\$16,239.19
091	SUSSEX	\$14,872.86	\$21,147.63	\$36,020.49
092	TAZEWELL	\$73,391.87	\$104,355.46	\$177,747.33
093	WARREN	\$43,109.00	\$61,296.42	\$104,405.42
094	WASHINGTON	\$56,235.11	\$79,960.36	\$136,195.47
095	WESTMORELAND	\$21,609.11	\$30,725.86	\$52,334.97
096	WISE	\$60,893.42	\$86,583.98	\$147,477.40
097	WYTHE	\$35,322.39	\$50,224.68	\$85,547.07
098	YORK	\$47,356.67	\$67,336.16	\$114,692.83
101	ALEXANDRIA CITY	\$130,969.06	\$186,224.11	\$317,193.17
102	BRISTOL CITY	\$32,490.74	\$46,198.39	\$78,689.13
103	BUENA VISTA CITY	\$10,323.49	\$14,678.91	\$25,002.40
104	CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY	\$54,353.27	\$77,284.58	\$131,637.85
106	COLONIAL HEIGHTS CITY	\$21,178.47	\$30,113.54	\$51,292.01
107	COVINGTON CITY	\$7,992.36	\$11,364.28	\$19,356.64
108	DANVILLE CITY	\$96,032.78	\$136,548.42	\$232,581.20
109	FALLS CHURCH CITY	\$8,066.55	\$11,469.78	\$19,536.33

LEA NO.	School Division	Entitlement Available July 1, 2021	Entitlement Available October 1, 2021	SY 2021 - 2022 Total Entitlements
110	FREDERICKSBURG CITY	\$46,524.99	\$66,153.59	\$112,678.58
111	GALAX CITY	\$14,975.90	\$21,294.14	\$36,270.04
112	HAMPTON CITY	\$183,990.85	\$261,615.46	\$445,606.31
113	HARRISONBURG CITY	\$52,107.01	\$74,090.64	\$126,197.65
114	HOPEWELL CITY	\$52,227.90	\$74,262.53	\$126,490.43
115	LYNCHBURG CITY	\$96,374.06	\$137,033.70	\$233,407.76
116	MARTINSVILLE CITY	\$29,474.02	\$41,908.94	\$71,382.96
117	NEWPORT NEWS CITY	\$288,094.50	\$409,639.82	\$697,734.32
118	NORFOLK CITY	\$385,181.28	\$547,686.91	\$932,868.19
119	NORTON CITY	\$7,678.07	\$10,917.40	\$18,595.47
120	PETERSBURG CITY	\$68,013.03	\$96,707.31	\$164,720.34
121	PORTSMOUTH CITY	\$186,389.12	\$265,025.55	\$451,414.67
122	RADFORD CITY	\$13,243.69	\$18,831.13	\$32,074.82
123	RICHMOND CITY	\$300,526.31	\$427,316.54	\$727,842.85
124	ROANOKE CITY	\$196,342.36	\$279,178.02	\$475,520.38
126	STAUNTON CITY	\$26,868.40	\$38,204.01	\$65,072.41
127	SUFFOLK CITY	\$111,609.06	\$158,696.25	\$270,305.31
128	VIRGINIA BEACH CITY	\$389,457.24	\$553,766.88	\$943,224.12
130	WAYNESBORO CITY	\$32,420.49	\$46,098.49	\$78,518.98
131	WILLIAMSBURG CITY	\$64,002.44	\$91,004.68	\$155,007.12
132	WINCHESTER CITY	\$39,780.86	\$56,564.16	\$96,345.02
135	FRANKLIN CITY	\$20,621.45	\$29,321.51	\$49,942.96
136	CHESAPEAKE CITY	\$259,645.13	\$369,187.83	\$628,832.96
139	SALEM CITY	\$23,474.27	\$33,377.91	\$56,852.18

LEA NO.	School Division	Entitlement Available July 1, 2021	Entitlement Available October 1, 2021	SY 2021 - 2022 Total Entitlements
142	POQUOSON CITY	\$8,439.82	\$12,000.54	\$20,440.36
143	MANASSAS CITY	\$50,361.49	\$71,608.69	\$121,970.18
144	MANASSAS PARK CITY	\$16,826.00	\$23,924.78	\$40,750.78
202	COLONIAL BEACH	\$7,464.04	\$10,613.08	\$18,077.12
207	WEST POINT	\$2,762.06	\$3,927.35	\$6,689.41
Blank Cell	TOTALS	\$8,710,272.80	\$12,385,083.94	\$21,095,356.74

The Virginia State Board of Education approved the 2020-2024 allocation of funds between secondary and postsecondary during its second review of the Perkins V Perkins Plan meeting, which was held on May 7, 2020.

Postsecondary

The postsecondary state allocations under Perkins V for July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, was communicated to the VCCS in a State Director Memo, May 23, 2021. Below are the specific dollar allocations made available by the VCCS for CTE programs under Perkins V for postsecondary education programs at the 23 Virginia community colleges.

The amount of each postsecondary institution's allocation is determined using a single formula that incorporates the number of CTE students receiving federal Pell Grants. The minimum allocation to each college is \$60,000.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	SY 2021-2022 Total Entitlements
Blue Ridge Community College	\$73,637.01
Central Virginia Community College	\$86,263.60
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	\$60,000.00
Danville Community College	\$118,279.67
Eastern Shore Community College	\$60,000.00
Germanna Community College	\$142,789.44

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	SY 2021-2022 Total Entitlements
J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College	\$308,465.70
John Tyler Community College	\$157,526.77
Lord Fairfax Community College	\$86,713.19
Mountain Empire Community College	\$150,369.70
New River Community College	\$102,911.04
Northern Virginia Community College	\$692,214.39
Patrick Henry Community College	\$87,423.51
Paul D. Camp Community College	\$60,000.00
Piedmont Community College	\$64,711.18
Rappahannock Community College	\$70,718.06
Southside Community College	\$108,080.98
Southwest Community College	\$161,305.98
Thomas Nelson Community College	\$219,789.85
Tidewater Community College	\$570,480.63
Virginia Highlands Community College	\$125,580.01
Virginia Western Community College	\$149,608.87
Wytheville Community College	\$92,658.10

The Virginia State Board of Education approved the 2020-2024 allocation of funds between secondary and postsecondary during its second review of the Perkins V Perkins Plan meeting, which was held on May 7, 2020.

Secondary and Postsecondary Reserve Fund

On May 7, 2020, the State Board of Education established a Perkins V reserve fund in the amount of 1.6 percent of the local formula distribution allocation. The reserve fund will be used to enhance and implement regional WBL experiences. These experiences will foster collaboration among secondary, postsecondary, and business and industry to ensure career pathways include best practices and strategies to promote innovation in targeted workforce sectors, which are aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Specific services will be provided in rural areas and areas

with disparities and gaps in performance. Secondary and Postsecondary reserve funds will be awarded through a competitive application process.

4. FOR THE UPCOMING PROGRAM YEAR, PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC DOLLAR ALLOCATIONS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY UNDER SECTION 132(A) OF THE ACT AND DESCRIBE HOW THESE ALLOCATIONS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND CONSORTIA OF ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE STATE.

Secondary

The VDOE provides leadership and technical assistance to the state's correctional institutes including the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The funding formula for these institutions is based on enrollment trends. Of the Perkins V allocation, \$157,696 is allocated to the DOC, and \$62,304 is allocated to the DJJ.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Funding provided for the DOC will be used to enhance and improve existing programs, develop and implement new programs, staff development, and industry credentialing opportunities consistent with Perkins V.

Efforts to expand the number of students that earn a certification through the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), the Residential Construction Academy, A+, Net+, OSHA 10, and many others will continue under Perkins V. Further, emphasis will be placed on utilization of computer-based training to provide real-world experiences. Also, the DOC has several articulation agreements for concurrent enrollment with community colleges that further assist students with their career development.

The DOC maintains an active Advisory Council of key stakeholders. The council provides guidance pertaining to program designs, instructional resources, and equipment.

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Funding provided for the DJJ will be used to enhance and improve existing programs, develop and implement new programs, staff development, and industry credentialing opportunities consistent with Perkins V.

Efforts to expand the number of students that earn a certification will continue under Perkins V. Further, emphasis will be placed on utilization of computer-based training to provide real-world experiences. The agency provides services to its postsecondary students through a partnership with Community College Work-force Alliance.

Also, the DJJ has several articulation agreements for concurrent enrollment with community colleges that further assist students with their career development.

The DJJ maintains an active Advisory Council of key stakeholders. The council provides guidance pertaining to program designs, instructional resources, employability, and equipment. Additionally, many of the council members come into the classrooms as mentors and guest lecturers.

The juvenile programs follow the same curriculum that is mandated for public schools. This assists students with re-enrolling in public schools when they are released. All their credits will transfer toward high school graduation.

Additionally, Virginia does not utilize consortia within the state.

Postsecondary

Please refer to II.C.3 (above) for a complete listing of dollar allocations. All specific dollar allocations are in compliance with section 132(a) of the Perkins V Act.

5. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ADJUST THE DATA USED TO MAKE THE ALLOCATIONS TO REFLECT ANY CHANGES IN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES THAT MAY HAVE OCCURRED SINCE THE POPULATION AND/OR ENROLLMENT DATA WAS COLLECTED, AND INCLUDE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES WITHOUT GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES, SUCH AS CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS FUNDED BY THE BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION. (SECTION 131(A)(3) OF PERKINS V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

There were no changes in the subrecipients' boundaries pursuant to Perkins IV or Perkins V.

6. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)—

- a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and
- b. Describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

Secondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request.

6. IF THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A WAIVER TO THE SECONDARY ALLOCATION FORMULA DESCRIBED IN SECTION 131(A)—

- a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and*
- b. Describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V)*
- c. Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).*

Secondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request

7. IF THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A WAIVER TO THE POSTSECONDARY ALLOCATION FORMULA DESCRIBED IN SECTION 132(A)—

a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and

b. Describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V)

Postsecondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request.

8. IF THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL AWARD RESERVE FUNDS TO ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS UNDER SECTION 112(C) OF PERKINS V, DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR AWARDING THOSE FUNDS.

N/A

9. PROVIDE THE STATE'S FISCAL EFFORT PER STUDENT, OR AGGREGATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE STATE, THAT WILL ESTABLISH THE BASELINE FOR THE SECRETARY'S ANNUAL DETERMINATION ON WHETHER THE STATE HAS MAINTAINED ITS FISCAL EFFORT, AND INDICATE WHETHER THE BASELINE IS A CONTINUING LEVEL OR NEW LEVEL. IF THE BASELINE IS NEW, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FISCAL EFFORT PER STUDENT, OR AGGREGATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE STATE, FOR THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR. (SECTION 211(B)(1)(D) OF PERKINS V)

Eligible Agency

Virginia's current maintenance of effort is based on aggregate expenditures. In the State Combined Annual Report (CAR) which was originally submitted in December 2019, the maintenance of effort listed for the state under non-federal share of expenditures (Column H) was \$1,415,524.70. The baseline is a continuing level.

D. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

1. IDENTIFY AND INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE (1) OF THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM QUALITY—

a. The percentage of CTE concentrators (see Text Box 6 for the statutory definition of a CTE concentrator under section 3(12) of Perkins V) graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential;

Virginia is selecting recognized postsecondary credential (1.a)

Core Indicator of Performance 5S1: Program Quality – Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential

The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential.

Numerator: Number of CTE concentrators who met or exceeded proficiency on industry standards to attain a recognized postsecondary credential (approved for a specific CTE program) and who, in the reporting year, graduated from secondary education.

Denominator: Number of CTE concentrators who took an assessment aligned to industry standards leading to attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential and who, in the reporting year, graduated from secondary education.

b. The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating high school having attained postsecondary credits in relevant career and technical education programs and programs of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment program or another credit transfer agreement; and/or

Virginia is not using the postsecondary credits quality indicator.

c. The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(I) of Perkins V)

Work-Based Learning

Virginia is selecting work-based learning experiences (1.c) for its measures of program quality.

Core Indicator of Performance 5S3: Program Quality – Participated in Work-based Learning

The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning.

Numerator: Number of CTE concentrators who participated in work-based learning and who, in the reporting year, graduated from secondary education.

Denominator: Number of CTE concentrators, in the reporting year, who graduated from secondary education.

2. INCLUDE ANY OTHER MEASURE(S) OF STUDENT SUCCESS IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION THAT ARE STATEWIDE, VALID, AND RELIABLE, AND COMPARABLE ACROSS THE STATE. (SECTION 113(B)(2)(A)(IV)(II) OF PERKINS V) PLEASE NOTE THAT INCLUSION OF “OTHER” PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURE(S) IS OPTIONAL FOR STATES.

Technical Attainment

Virginia is selecting Technical Skill Attainment as an additional measure. Technical Skill Attainment was a Virginia Core Indicator under Perkins IV that provided valuable statewide, valid, reliable, and comparable data.

5S4—Technical Skills Attainment: Rate for School Divisions is calculated as follows:

1. Competency Rate from End-of-Year Student Record Collection (CTE Completers)

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who attained a satisfactory rating (one of the three highest marks) on the Student Competency Rating (SCR) scale on at least 80 percent of the required (essential) competencies in a CTE course

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

3. PROVIDE THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY'S MEASUREMENT DEFINITION WITH A NUMERATOR AND DENOMINATOR FOR EACH OF THE QUALITY INDICATOR(S) THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY SELECTS TO USE.

1. Participation Rate Percentage of CTE Completers Taking External Credentialing Tests

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who participated in an approved external examination

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

1. Passing Rate of CTE Completers Taking External Credentialing Tests

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who passed an approved external examination

Denominator: Number of CTE completers taking external credentialing tests

1. Completers Passing Credentialing Tests

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who passed an approved external examination

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

1. CTE Completers who Passed a Credentialing Test Plus Completers Who Earned an Advanced Studies Diploma and Did Not Pass a Credentialing Test

Numerator: Number of CTE completers passing a credentialing test plus the number of CTE completers earning an Advanced Studies Diploma without passing a credentialing test

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

4. PROVIDE ON THE FORM IN SECTION V.B, FOR EACH YEAR COVERED BY THE STATE PLAN BEGINNING IN FY 2020, STATE DETERMINED PERFORMANCE LEVELS OR EACH OF THE SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY CORE INDICATORS, WITH THE LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE BEING THE SAME FOR ALL CTE CONCENTRATORS IN THE STATE. (SECTION 113(B)(3)(A)(I)(I) OF PERKINS V)

Secondary

Indicators	Baseline Level	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Format
1S1: Four-Year Graduation Rate	93	93.5	94	94.5	95	Percentage
2S1: Academic Proficiency in Reading Language Arts	85	85.25	85.5	85.75	86	Percentage
2S2: Academic Proficiency in Mathematics	85	85.25	85.5	85.75	86	Percentage
2S3: Academic Proficiency in Science	85	85.25	85.5	85.75	86	Percentage
3S1: Post-Program Placement	93	93.25	93.5	93.75	94	Percentage
4S1: Non-traditional Program Concentration	28	28.25	28.5	28.75	29	Percentage
5S1: Program Quality – Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential	65	65.25	65.5	65.75	66	Percentage
5S3: Program Quality – Participated in Work-Based Learning	10	10.25	10.5	10.75	11	Percentage
5S4: Program Quality – Other	80	80.5	81	81.5	82	Percentage

Postsecondary

Indicators	Baseline Level	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	Format
1P1: Post-Program Placement	65.5	65.6	65.7	65.8	65.9	Percentage
2P1: Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential	40.9	41	41.1	41.2	41.3	Percentage
3P1: Non-Traditional Program Concentration	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.4	16.5	Percentage

5. DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURE THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY ADOPTED FOR DETERMINING STATE DETERMINED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 113 OF PERKINS V, WHICH AT A MINIMUM SHALL INCLUDE—

a. A description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance (see Text Box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on State determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V);

The process used to establish the State Determined Performance Levels for each of the core indicators at the secondary level and postsecondary level included opportunities for all stakeholders interested in the state's performance indicators to participate.

Secondary

These measures and levels of performance were reviewed by stakeholders including: directors of CTE for each local school division, the VCCS, and the state Perkins V core stakeholders' team and WIOA Combined State Plan workgroup participants.

Recommendations for performance measures and level of performance on which consensus were reached, and then submitted for public comment through a portal on the VDOE website. All participants were made aware that additional indicators of performance, with corresponding measures and levels of performance, would also be developed if needed.

b. An explanation for the State determined levels of performance that meet each of the statutory requirements in Text Box 8; and

Secondary

These measures and levels of performance were reviewed by stakeholders including: directors of CTE for each local school division, the VCCS, and the state Perkins V core stakeholders' team and WIOA Combined State Plan workgroup participants.

Recommendations for performance measures and level of performance on which consensus

were reached, and then submitted for public comment through a portal on the VDOE website. All participants were made aware that additional indicators of performance, with corresponding measures and levels of performance, would also be developed if needed.

Virginia Secondary actual Perkins V performance data for program years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 (past two years) was used to calculate “floors” for FY2025 State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs) per 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(III)(ee). Please note that Virginia requests to allow for meaningful progress and negotiate its SDPLs pursuant to 113(b)(3)(A)(iii) Unanticipated Circumstances as provided in chart below.

Core Indicator Code	Core Indicator of Performance	State Negotiated Level of Performance FY 2024	2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Two-Year Average of Core Indicator Performance	Requested Negotiated State Level of Performance Due to Unanticipated Circumstances FY 2025
1S1	Four Year Graduation Rate	95.00%	98.49	96.00
2S1	Academic Proficiency in Reading Language Arts	86.00%	95.7	87.00
2S2	Academic Proficiency in Mathematics	86.00%	94.59	87.00
2S3	Academic Proficiency in Science	86.00%	90.29	87.00
3S1	Post-Program Placement	94.00%	96.22	95.00
4S1	Nontraditional Program Concentration	29.00%	31.84	29.50

Core Indicator Code	Core Indicator of Performance	State Negotiated Level of Performance FY 2024	2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Two-Year Average of Core Indicator Performance	Requested Negotiated State Level of Performance Due to Unanticipated Circumstances FY 2025
5S1	Program Quality—Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential	66.00%	89.425	68.00
5S3	Program Quality—Participated in Work-Based Learning	11.00%	33.91	20.00
5S4	Program Quality—Technical Skills Attainment	82.00%	94.16	84.00

Unanticipated consequences that will limit or prevent meaningful progress include: 1S1: unsustainable graduation rates due to Pandemic related U.S. Department of Education waivers; 2S1, 2S2, and 2S3: unsustainable graduation rates due to Pandemic-related U.S. Department of Education waivers. Additionally, the Virginia Board of Education is in the process of resetting its academic Standards of Learning (SOL) that may significantly affect 2S1, 2S2, and 2S3; 3S1: data reported during school years affected by the Pandemic may not allow for school divisions to have meaningful progress with this measure; 4S1: Virginia Secondary is working with the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center to re-norm its “nontraditional” identified CTE classes (last re-normed 2017-2018), which may cause previously “nontraditional” courses to be resigned to “gender neutral” and may not allow for school divisions to have meaningful progress with this measure; 5S1: Virginia Secondary is in the process of aligning its Industry Recognized Credentials with the VCCS, Department of Labor and other state agencies, and the results may substantially change or provide for unanticipated results that may not allow for school divisions to have meaningful progress with this measure; 5S3: Work-based Learning opportunities are growing substantially, we

request a significantly higher percentage than previously negotiated, however, the percentage based on the two-year average may not allow for school divisions to have meaningful progress with this measure; and 5S4: technical attainment is vital to Virginia Secondary, and we request a higher percentage than previously negotiated, however, the percentage based on the two-year average may not allow for school divisions to have meaningful progress with this measure.

In the next two school years, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026, the Virginia Secondary will reassess its SDPLs and renegotiate with U.S. Department of Education to reset its SDPLs using more accurate data.

Postsecondary

All postsecondary levels of performance:

- Are expressed in a percentage or numerical form, so as to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable
- Reflect VCCS' commitment to continually make meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all CTE students
- Have been subject to the public comment process as described in this application.
- If adjusted, will take into account how the levels of performance involved compare with the state levels of performance established for other states, considering factors including the characteristics of actual (as opposed to anticipated) CTE concentrators when the CTE concentrators entered the program, and the services or instruction to be provided.
- If adjusted, will be higher than the average actual performance of the two most recently completed program years, except in the case of unanticipated circumstances that require revisions in accordance with other statutory provisions.
- Take into account the extent to which the state determined levels of performance advance the eligible agency's goals, as set forth in the state plan.

c. A description of how the State determined levels of performance set by the eligible agency align with the levels, goals and objectives other Federal and State laws, (Section 122(d)(10) of Perkins V).

Secondary

Virginia has achieved a coherent state system of accountability by aligning Perkins V performance measures with priority measures embedded in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, ESSA, Consolidated State Plan, and the Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan. These performance measures and performance levels span across state and Federal laws, and present an aligned message to stakeholders about which outcomes are valued in increasing the career and college readiness for all students.

The approach used to establish State determined levels of performance for each of the Perkins performance measures is consistent with the State accountability approach using a growth model. Each recipient is expected to demonstrate progress (growth) on each measure, relative to their previous performance. Performance level baselines for indicators 1S1, 2S1, 2S2, 3S1, 5S4A-E, and 1P1 were established using the State's baselines and

projections approved by the USDE in the Virginia negotiated performance targets previously set for the reporting year 2018-2019. The level of performance baselines for indicators 2S3, 4S1, 5S1, 5S3, 2P1, and 3P1 were established by an analysis of currently collected data that had not been previously reported for Perkins IV reporting measures but was determined to be reliable and valid across Virginia.

Postsecondary

The postsecondary baseline was established after analysis of actual outcomes achieved in the 2017-2018 academic year. The VCCS is committed to improving performance in each of the measures. Increases shown each year reflect anticipated meaningful progress toward improved CTE performance.

6. AS PART OF THE PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING STATE DETERMINED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE, DESCRIBE THE PROCESS THAT WILL BE USED TO ESTABLISH A BASELINE FOR THOSE LEVELS.

Secondary

Virginia has achieved a coherent state system of accountability by aligning Perkins V performance measures with priority measures embedded in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, ESSA, Consolidated State Plan, and the Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan. These performance measures and performance levels span across state and Federal laws, and present an aligned message to stakeholders about which outcomes are valued in increasing the career and college readiness for all students.

The approach used to establish State determined levels of performance for each of the Perkins performance measures is consistent with the State accountability approach using a growth model. Each recipient is expected to demonstrate progress (growth) on each measure, relative to their previous performance. Performance level baselines for indicators 1S1, 2S1, 2S2, 3S1, 5S4A-E, and 1P1 were established using the State's baselines and projections approved by the USDE in the Virginia negotiated performance targets previously set for the reporting year 2018-2019. The level of performance baselines for indicators 2S3, 4S1, 5S1, 5S3, 2P1, and 3P1 were established by an analysis of currently collected data that had not been previously reported for Perkins IV reporting measures but was determined to be reliable and valid across Virginia.

Postsecondary

The postsecondary baseline was established after analysis of actual outcomes achieved in the 2017-2018 academic year. The VCCS is committed to improving performance in each of the measures. Increases shown each year reflect anticipated meaningful progress toward improved CTE performance.

7. PROVIDE A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE COMMENTS REGARDING STATE DETERMINED PERFORMANCE LEVELS RECEIVED DURING THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD PURSUANT TO SECTION 113(B)(3)(B) OF PERKINS V. (SECTION 113(B)(3)(B)(III) OF PERKINS V). AS PART

OF THE WRITTEN RESPONSE, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF ANY THE CHANGES MADE TO THE STATE DETERMINED PERFORMANCE LEVELS AS A RESULT OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK.

Secondary and Postsecondary

There were no written comments pertaining to the State Determined Performance Levels during the public comment period from the general public, state agencies, and members of the State Board of Education.

8. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ADDRESS DISPARITIES OR GAPS IN PERFORMANCE AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 113(B)(3)(C)(II)(II) OF PERKINS V IN EACH OF THE PLAN YEARS, AND IF NO MEANINGFUL PROGRESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED PRIOR TO THE THIRD PROGRAM YEAR, A DESCRIPTION OF THE ADDITIONAL ACTIONS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL TAKE TO ELIMINATE THESE DISPARITIES OR GAPS. (SECTION 122(D)(11) OF PERKINS V)

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP),² the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

[2] See page 11 of Committee Report at <https://www.congress.gov/115/crpt/srpt434/CRPT-115srpt434.pdf>.

Secondary and Postsecondary

The VDOE and VCCS will review the Statewide CTE Annual Performance Report (APR) and analyze the data on the indicators to identify gaps among student groups in performance and equity, if any.

Further, each secondary school division and postsecondary college will receive an APR, which includes the Performance Measures for the Core Indicators of Performance. These reports include Perkins Performance Standards and Virginia Agreed Upon Performance Levels for previous year's data for use in the analysis of CTE performance and annual planning, and to identify gaps among student groups in performance and equity.

If a performance standard is not met, the school division and/or postsecondary institution must explain why, and the actions taken to improve performance. Once a school/college has met the State performance standards, they must maintain or show continuous improvement each year.

Each recipient will be required to provide an analysis of CTE student performance and identify improvement efforts in their annual application. This information will be used to inform appropriate technical assistance, on-site visits, and/or local Federal Program Monitoring visits.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The following documents serve as the foundation for operation of Virginia's TANF program:

- (1) Commonwealth of Virginia TANF State Plan;
- (2) Code of Virginia § 63.2-600 through 63.2-620, and 63.2-1908;
- (3) Virginia Administrative Code relating to the TANF program § 22VAC40-35-10 through 22VAC40-35-130 and § 22VAC40-295-10 through 22VAC40-295-170.

The goal of Virginia's TANF Program is to enable TANF recipients to become self-reliant. Meaningful employment is essential to achieving the goal of self-sufficiency, but not all families will be able to meet this goal in the period defined by applicable time limits. Many TANF families include one or more individuals that face at least one barrier which would impede successful participation in the Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) program. During the initial interview for TANF, the applicant completes a "Do You Have a Disability?" form which may identify disabilities.

Additionally, when the individual is referred to the VIEW program, they will be offered screening for learning disabilities, limited English proficiency, and mental health issues if a disability determination has not been made and it seems likely that a barrier may be affecting the client's progress in the VIEW program. On a voluntary basis, alcohol and substance abuse screenings (not testing), are offered.

All VIEW participants must be offered the screenings within 90 days of signing the Agreement of Personal Responsibility and entering the VIEW program. If the screening indicates that the client may have a disability, the client will be referred to a qualified professional for an in-depth disability evaluation. If the in-depth evaluation indicates the existence of a disability, treatments and/or services to address the disability will be made part of the client's required program assignments.

The number of required hours of participation is set at 35 hours per week, but may be adjusted based upon barriers such as language or disability of the participant or family household member. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to: part-time or flexible hours for work activities, providing the individual with work activities in a specific

work environment that enables the individual to participate in work activities, providing particular types of jobs or work activities that are consistent with the person's limitations, activities that are scheduled so they do not conflict with ongoing medical or mental health treatment, additional notice of program appointments, additional explanation of program rules, job coaches, additional time to complete program requirements, and additional intervention before an individual is sanctioned for non-compliance with VIEW program requirements.

Virginia's TANF program meets the requirements mandated by "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193)."

COMPONENTS OF VIRGINIA'S TANF PROGRAM

The following components are included in Virginia's TANF Program:

Diversions Assistance - Diversions assistance provides a one-time cash payment to meet a family's needs during a crisis such as transportation, child care, or housing. The amount of the payment is based on the actual needs of the family, but can be up to four months of assistance or \$1,500, whichever is greater. To qualify for diversions assistance, an applicant must be otherwise eligible for TANF, with the exception of some non-financial criteria. The applicant relinquishes their right to TANF assistance for a period equal to the benefit total plus one-third (a 1/1.33 ratio). A family may receive diversions assistance once in a twelve-month period. Diversions Assistance is funded with TANF and state general funds.

TANF-Emergency Assistance - Up to \$1,500 may be received at once to needy families with children who are eligible for TANF for eviction prevention, a natural disaster, or a fire. Natural disasters may include, but are not limited to, a tornado, hurricane, flood, or pandemic. TANF-Emergency Assistance is funded with TANF and state general funds.

Learnfare - This provision was designed to keep children, including minor parents, in school. To be eligible for assistance, children in the assistance unit under age 18, including minor parents, must comply with state compulsory school attendance requirements. A child is considered as meeting this requirement until the local department of social services receives notification that the child is truant. A child who is 18 years old meets the school attendance requirement, regardless of actual attendance, as long as they are enrolled. Truancy is defined as noncompliance with state compulsory school attendance requirements, as determined by the local school division pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 22.1-254 et seq., and any additional rules deemed necessary by the local school board to carry out the intent of state compulsory school attendance laws.

When the local department of social services verifies through the school that a child is truant, the local social services department must do the following:

- (1) Send a written notice to the caretaker advising him that the truant recipient is in jeopardy of losing eligibility for benefits. The caretaker must contact the local department within five days of the notice to cooperate in developing a plan to achieve compliance with compulsory school attendance laws. The notice must also specify that failure to contact the local

department may result in the truant recipient's ineligibility for assistance due to non-cooperation.

(2) If the caretaker does not respond within five days, the worker must attempt to personally contact the caretaker.

(3) If the local department is unable to make personal contact, the local department must mail a written advance notice of proposed action to the caretaker advising that benefits will be reduced if the caretaker fails to contact the local department to develop a plan to return the child to school.

If the local department of social services denies or terminates assistance for noncompliance, the caretaker must notify the local department in writing of the truant individual's compliance with school attendance requirements and file a new application for benefits. The local department must verify compliance by contacting the school before reinstating assistance for the child.

Minor Parent Residency Requirement - Under this provision, a minor mother must live with her parent or a person standing in loco parentis in order to receive TANF benefits. Assistance is denied if the residency requirement is not met. There are exceptions if the minor parent is married, the minor parent has no parent or person standing in loco parentis who is living, the minor parent has no parent or person standing in loco parentis whose whereabouts are known, there is no appropriate person willing to assume the responsibility of acting in loco parentis, or the physical or emotional health or safety of the minor parent or dependent child would be jeopardized if the minor parent and child lived in the same residence with the parent or person standing in loco parentis.

Paternity Establishment - Mothers must identify the fathers of their children to receive TANF benefits. If unable to do so, they must identify all men who could be the father. Unless there is good cause to not cooperate, failure to cooperate during the first six months of receipt of assistance will result in removal of the parent's needs or a reduction in the assistance payment of 25 percent, whichever is greater. Continued non-cooperation with paternity establishment after six months may result in case closure.

When the reason for not providing the information is one of the following, no sanction is imposed:

- (1) The child or parent may be subjected to physical or emotional harm;
- (2) The child was conceived due to rape or incest;
- (3) The child is being placed for adoption.

In addition, when paternity has not been established and the caretaker cannot provide the name of the noncustodial parent(s) plus at least three pieces of identifying information, she must attest to the lack of information under penalty of perjury. In this situation, no penalty will be imposed for non-cooperation.

Immunization Requirement - Parents are required to provide their children with all necessary immunizations to receive full benefits. Failure to immunize children within the

required period results in assistance being reduced by \$50 for the first child out of compliance, and \$25 for each additional child out of compliance.

OTHER PROGRAM RULES IN VIRGINIA'S TANF PROGRAM

Assistance Unit - An assistance unit normally consists of the parents and their children living with them who meet the non-financial requirements of eligibility, such as age, relationship, and citizenship. When the children live with an adult relative other than a parent, such as a grandparent, the assistance unit may consist of the children only or, if the adult relative also needs assistance, the children and the adult relative.

The following persons must be included in the assistance unit if living with the child for whom TANF has been requested: the natural or adoptive parents and any blood-related or adopted siblings. Parents or children who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or are statutorily ineligible for TANF under other provisions of law cannot be included in the assistance unit.

Children and parents who are excluded from the assistance unit for failure to follow program rules, such as not providing a social security number for a child or parent or refusing to cooperate with the Division of Child Support Enforcement, are included in the assistance unit for purposes of determining whether the family meets financial eligibility requirements; however, their needs are not included for purposes of determining the amount of the family's monthly benefits.

Benefit Levels - The State Board of Social Services has established standards of assistance, based on the size of the assistance unit, to be used in all TANF cash payment cases. Because of a wide variation in shelter costs within the state, two groups of standards have been established reflecting this variation.

Group II						
Family Size	Gross Income Screening	Standard of Assistance	VIEW Screening			
1	524	262	1133			
2	767	385	1526			
3	966	482	1920			
4	1152	577	2313			
5	1361	681	2706			
6	1522	761	3100			
7	1703	851	3493			
8	1901	951	3886			
9	2068	1035	4280			
10	2253	1127	4674			
each addition	189	95	394			
maximum amount		723				
Group III						
Family Size	Gross Income Screening	Standard of Assistance	VIEW Screening			
1	730	366	1133			
2	974	489	1526			
3	1175	587	1920			
4	1361	681	2313			
5	1622	811	2706			
6	1773	887	3100			
7	1960	979	3493			
8	2158	1079	3886			
9	2326	1164	4280			
10	2509	1254	4674			
each addition	189	95				
maximum amount		861				

Drug Felons – Pursuant to §63.2-505.2 of the Code of Virginia, Virginia opts out of the application of §115(a)(1) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and shall not deny TANF assistance solely because of a drug felony conviction.

Additional Eligibility Requirements Applicable to Children - Basic eligibility requirements must be met for a child to qualify for TANF assistance, as follows:

Age - The child must be under age 18, or if age 18 must be attending school.

Living with a Relative -The child must be living in the home of a parent or other relative except for temporary absences of up to 60 consecutive days.

Residence in Virginia - The child must reside in Virginia.

Additional Eligibility Requirements Applicable to the Family - Additional requirements that must be met by the family (parent or other adult caretaker and children) are as follows:

Income - To qualify for TANF assistance, the assistance unit's countable income must pass screenings: 1) gross income is compared to the maximum income level and 2) net income is compared to the standard of assistance, based on the family's size. Once the family is determined to be financially needy, the monthly payment is calculated. Income is counted prospectively in determining financial eligibility and the monthly payment amount. A standard work deduction equal to that used in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Family Size	Standard Deduction

1-4	\$193

5	\$225

6 or more	\$258

After the standard deduction is applied, the amount is reduced by twenty percent. Deductions for child and/or incapacitated adult care are also applied in determining applicants' eligibility for benefits. For full-time employment, deduct an amount equal to the anticipated cost, not to exceed \$175 per month, for care of each child, age 2 and older and/or incapacitated adult in the assistance unit. In the case of child care for a child under 2 years old, deduct the anticipated cost not to exceed \$200 per month. 2) For part-time employment, deduct an amount equal to the anticipated cost, not to exceed \$120 per month, for care of each child and/or incapacitated adult in the assistance unit.

Once a family member agrees, in writing, to participate in the VIEW Program, the family's earnings are evaluated in comparison to the federal poverty levels, based on assistance unit size.

Countable unearned income reduces the grant amount dollar for dollar for both VIEW and non-VIEW families.

OTHER TANF ACTIVITIES

In addition to the TANF cash assistance program administered by local departments of social services, the Virginia Department of Social Services has established other programs to provide additional services. Services are provided both to families receiving TANF and to other low-income families who have transitioned off the TANF cash assistance program or are at risk of becoming TANF recipients. These programs must meet at least one of the four purposes of the TANF program.

The four purposes of the TANF program are:

Purpose 1 - To provide assistance to needy families with children so that the children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

Purpose 2 - End dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

Purpose 3 - Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, including establishing prevention and reduction goals.

Purpose 4 - Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

For purposes one and two, an income test is required. The state has set a maximum income level that ensures that benefits are provided for needy populations. The maximum income level for services provided under purposes one and two is 200 percent of the federal poverty limit.

The following is a description of program activities established by the Department of Social Services or other agencies or organizations to assist the Commonwealth in carrying out the purposes of the TANF program.

(1) Solely State Funded Program Serving Two-parent Families

The State has established a solely state funded program to serve needy two-parent families. State funds are used for cash assistance payments, employment services, and program administrative costs. Expenditures in this program do not count toward the Commonwealth's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement.

This program is designed to meet the special needs of two-parent families in helping them to attain self-sufficiency. For two-parent VIEW families, the income limit is 150% of the federal poverty level.

(2) VIEW Transitional Payments

A separate state program has been established to provide assistance to eligible families that are participating in VIEW and who exit from TANF assistance with employment of at least 30 hours per week. Such families receive assistance for up to one year after the exit from TANF assistance as long as employment at least 30 hours per week is maintained. The eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative who meets the employment requirement.

(3) Employment Advancement

Description of Program -This program is designed to provide service approaches and strategies that help current and former TANF clients, including sanctioned individuals and those with barriers to employment such as learning, mental, and physical disabilities, and sanctioned individuals to prepare, enter, succeed, and advance in the workplace. This program enhances the VIEW program and it is expected that local agencies will also utilize their current VIEW funds and maximize the uses of other funds to address the needs of TANF recipients with significant barriers to employment. The funds may also be used for services that increase wages and retention as well as improve job placement, so that a long-term impact is made on the earnings of families. Employment Advancement is funded with TANF.

This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population - The funds will be used for current and former TANF recipients.

Eligible Families - Program participants are current or former TANF recipients or those who qualify as TANF-eligible family members. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is administered statewide.

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(4) Child Safety and Well-Being

Description of Activities - Funding is provided to support social workers in local departments of social services to engage in activities designed to preserve and support families with children.

Some examples of preservation services are:

- Pre-placement prevention services designed to help children remain in the home.
- Service programs designed to provide follow-up care to families to whom a child is returned after a foster care placement;
- Services designed to improve parenting skills;
- Support services are defined as direct services promoting the safety and well-being of children and families designed to increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families), to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, to afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment, to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages, and otherwise to enhance child development.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose one. Child safety and well-being is funded with TANF and non-MOE state funds.

Target Population - The target population is families with children at-risk being removed from the home for abuse and neglect.

Eligible Families - Any family 1) expecting a child or having minor children under age 6 in the home, 2) with an income level at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - Commonwealth of Virginia.

Confidentiality Requirement - all records of families receiving these services and assistance are subject to the confidentiality requirements of local departments.

(5) Families Forward

Description of Program - The mission of Families Forward is "to partner with communities, to strengthen families with young children, to improve community health, and to increase family self-sufficiency."

Families Forward programs are local public/private partnerships, which provide comprehensive care coordination, family support and referral to medical and dental services for low-income at-risk children. Families Forward programs provide a case management process which helps identified families connect to needed services. Families Forward does not provide medical or dental services. Local programs are overseen by both a management team (executive or senior level management of partner agencies - public health and community-based organizations) and an advisory council (a broad group comprised of community representatives and local government, social services, health, mental health, education, private business, and parents).

Families Forward's efforts to match a family to comprehensive preventive and primary care providers, coupled with family support services, guides families to the effective use of health care and community services. Families Forward builds the health of communities by promoting child health and increased family self-sufficiency. Families Forward home visitors work to develop plans for parenting education, health and nutrition, home safety, education and job training.

The program provides nonassistance benefits and services (case management) with the added goals of improving parents' employability and income earning capacity, so they can move on to self-sufficiency. Families Forward focuses on making the connection between the family and the assistance provider. While Families Forward's efforts cross over into several TANF purposes, they are deemed primarily to focus on TANF purpose one.

Target Population - This program targets low-income families with at-risk children to promote strong families, improve child health and increase family self-sufficiency.

Eligible Families - Any family 1) expecting a child or having minor children under age 6 in the home, 2) with an income level at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - Families Forward operates in 7 sites, serving children in 27 localities across the state. Sites are located in Arlington, Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Radford, Richmond, Roanoke, and Abingdon.

Confidentiality Requirement - Families Forward maintains client confidentiality by incorporating a "Consent to Exchange Information" form into the process. This form allows the family to explicitly choose to limit certain information from any affiliate. It further defines the family approved reason for sharing the information. Absent a parent or guardian's signature on the form, no information is shared with any affiliate.

(6) Healthy Families

Description of Program - Healthy Families programs offer voluntary, intensive home visiting services for up to five years to new parents who are assessed as being at—risk for child abuse/neglect. The services include in-home parenting education and support services to parents who need individualized and comprehensive support. Families participating in Healthy Families are assigned a Family Support Worker who provides home visiting services based on developing a trusting relationship with families and building on family strengths. Family needs are assessed and a case plan is developed. This plan includes role modeling in problem solving, developing effective parenting techniques and home management skills, ensuring well baby care and linking the family with appropriate community resources.

A Healthy Families Assessment Worker completes a Family Needs Assessment during pregnancy or at birth. If a family is identified as being at high risk of child maltreatment, and in need of support services, that family is offered the opportunity to participate in the Healthy Families program. When families accept services, comprehensive home visiting is initiated and Family Support Workers monitor and follow up on prenatal, postnatal, and pediatric care. In addition, Healthy Families provides early intervention through parent education, child development screenings, and nutrition counseling. Only nonassistance services and benefits are provided.

Healthy Families addresses TANF purpose one.

The Healthy Families program supports families by increasing access to and coordinating community services that meet individual family needs. The program also builds on family strengths.

Target Population - New parents or expectant parents are screened for services. Those new or expectant parents who are assessed as being at—risk for child abuse/neglect are offered the voluntary home-visiting services. Due to limited resources, many localities only offer these services to first-time parents.

Eligible Families - Segregated federal TANF funds are used to serve families with children and expectant families who are not TANF recipients. MOE funds are used to serve participants in the program who qualify as TANF recipients or as TANF-eligible family members. A TANF eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program has 29 sites serving 79 cities and counties in Virginia. Localities to be served by Healthy Families are listed below:

Alexandria, Arlington, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, Augusta County, Bath County, Highland County, Rockingham County, Bedford, Bedford County, Lynchburg, Appomattox County, Amherst County, Charles City County, New Kent County, Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Chesterfield County, Colonial Heights, Culpeper, Danville, Pittsylvania County, Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Fauquier County, Hampton, Henrico County, Hopewell, Prince George County, Loudoun County, Newport News, Winchester, Clark County, Frederick County, Orange County, Petersburg, Amelia County, Buckingham County, Charlotte County, Cumberland County, Lunenburg County, Nottoway County, Prince Edward County, Campbell County, Fredericksburg, Caroline County, King George County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County, Richmond City, Shenandoah County, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Isle of Wight County, Essex County, Gloucester County, King William County, King & Queen County, Lancaster County, Mathews County, Middlesex County, Northumberland County, Richmond County, Westmoreland County, Virginia Beach, Martinsville, Franklin County, Patrick County, Henry County, Page County, Farmville, Madison County, Rappahannock County, Lee County, Scott County, Wise County, Norton, Warren County

Confidentiality Requirement - Contracts between the Department of Social Services and local programs include a confidentiality clause as follows: Any information obtained by the Contractor concerning recipients of services under this agreement shall be treated as confidential in accordance with relevant provisions of State and federal law.

(7) Community Action Agencies

Description of Program - The Community Action Network consists of 26 local agencies that provide a wide array of services for low-income families and individuals. TANF funds are used to provide a variety of services to needy families including emergency services, case management services, supportive services including childcare and transportation to employed families, cars for work programs, individual development account programs, intensive life skills training for families who are at risk to lose children to foster care, and computer skills.

Services and benefits provided may only be in the form of nonassistance. Contracts with administering agencies prohibit the provision of TANF "assistance." The services and benefits provided meet TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population - The program is targeted to serve needy families with minor children.

Eligible Families - To be eligible, families must be TANF recipients or TANF-eligible family members. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Confidentiality Requirement - The contract requires the agency to maintain the confidentiality of client information in accordance with relevant provisions of State and federal law.

(8) Domestic Violence Program

Description of Program - The services provided are crisis and core services to victims of domestic violence, including 24-hour crisis telephone service, shelter, crisis counseling, supportive counseling, information and referral, transportation, coordination of services, legal advocacy, and basic children's services for children of victims of domestic violence. Funds may be used only to provide services and benefits that meet the TANF definition of nonassistance.

The services relate primarily to TANF purposes three and four.

Target Population - The target population served is women who are victims of domestic violence who have dependent children with them, or who are pregnant.

Eligible Families - Program participants are limited to those who qualify as TANF recipients or as TANF-eligible family members. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - Domestic violence programs are statewide.

Confidentiality Requirement - Domestic violence programs have stringent confidentiality requirements from their other funding sources, and use these for the TANF population as well.

(9) Child Abuse and Neglect Advocacy Projects

Description of Program - These projects provide for the crisis intervention, parent education, family treatment, or child and family support groups.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

Target Population - The target population is families with children at-risk being removed from the home for abuse and neglect.

Eligible Families – Eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served – statewide

Confidentiality Requirement – all records of families receiving these services and assistance are subject to strict confidentiality requirements guarding against any unauthorized disclosure of information.

(10) Earned Income Credit Outreach

Description of Program - The Virginia Community Action Partnership provides outreach, education and tax preparation services via the Virginia Earned Income Tax Coalition and other community non-profit organizations to citizens who may be eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose two.

Target Population - The target population is low-income working families with children.

Eligible Families - Families that meet the income requirements to qualify for the earned income credit.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is administered statewide.

(11) Community Employment and Training

Description of Program - Community employment and training programs are designed to move current and former TANF clients and those with incomes 200% or less of the poverty level into meaningful employment with the prospect of a career path and wage growth. The program provides resources to expand and enhance evidence-based innovative types of service delivery efforts to address more fully the needs of the target population prior to their entry into work and during employment.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose two.

Target Population - The target population is families with children with incomes 200% or less of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is administered statewide.

(12) Homeless Services

Description of Program - Supportive services are provided that address the basic needs of families in crisis to prevent homelessness. This includes meals, shelter, counseling, and housing location assistance. The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

Eligible Families – The target population is families with children with incomes 200% or less of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served – Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince William

(13) Federation of Virginia Food Banks

Description of Activities – Programs are offered on a statewide basis to assist needy families with children with meals and access to nutritional food. A wide variety of strategies are implemented, including summer feeding programs, weekend feeding programs, and food distribution. This program is intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

Target population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area Served – The program is administered statewide.

Confidentiality Requirement – Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(14) Family Self-Sufficiency Projects

Description of Program -This program is designed to utilize Family Coaches to develop individual development plans with selected families as part of a Whole Family/Two-Generation Pilot Project. Selected agencies are Community Action agencies (Designated agencies that work year-round on anti-poverty programs and approaches) that develop program designs, theories of change, and logic models for whole family work. Agencies work with 5-15 families at a time to identify barriers to self-sufficiency for all members of the family, and work to deliver services, or work with partners in the community, to eliminate those barriers. These can include new or better employment, child care, education resources, health care (through partners if applicable), financial education, parenting classes, transportation, and any number of other services. The pilot project is designed to achieve self-sufficiency outcomes for TANF-eligible families through the intensive Family Coaching model, which goes beyond case management to include direct coaching/mentoring and an integrated use of all community partners.

This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population - The funds will be serving families with children.

Eligible Families - Program participants are families that are TANF-eligible. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is funding six agencies that serve in the following counties and independent cities in the Commonwealth:

Counties: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Amelia County, Buckingham County, Cumberland County, Lunenburg County, Nottoway County, Prince Edward County, Buchanan County, Clarke County, Dickenson County, Fauquier County, Frederick County, Page County, Prince William County, Russell County, Shenandoah County, Shenandoah County, Warren County, Washington County, Brunswick County, Greensville County, Surry County, Sussex County, Caroline County, Charles City County, Hanover County, King George County, King William County, King and Queen County, New Kent County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County

Cities: City of Radford, City of Hampton, City of Newport News, City of Bristol, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, City of Emporia, City of Fredericksburg

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(15) Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

Description of Program – Funds are provided to the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation to provide technical assistance to improve childcare programs and to improve community programs that enhances the health, safety, well-being, and school readiness of Virginia’s youth.

Target Population – Technical assistance is provided to improve childcare programs that serve children. Families served directly with TANF funding are families with children under 200% of poverty.

Geographic Area – These services are provided on a statewide basis.

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(16) Individual Development Accounts

Description of Program – Funds are provided for the establishment of individual development accounts. Savers will save funds in accounts designated for the purposes of home purchase, transportation, education, starting a business, or for self-sufficiency. Savings deposited in the designated accounts must be from earned income. Once the saver reaches the savings goal, match funds are provided at an eight to one rate. All payments are made directly to vendors. This initiative provides non-assistance benefits meeting TANF purpose one.

Target Population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area – These services are provided on a statewide basis.

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(17) Virginia Transit Association

Description of Program – Funds are provided to provide transportation to TANF-eligible individuals. This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area – These services are provided in Harrisonburg, Fredericksburg, and Hampton.

(18) United Community

Description of Program – Funds are provided to offer wrap-around services for low-income families to TANF-eligible individuals. These services include assessment, case management, employment barrier reduction, child care, advocacy, employment supports, and basic need assistance including food assistance and rental assistance. This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area – These services are provided in Alexandria, Virginia.

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The VIEW Program is a workforce development program that assists individuals in attaining the goal of obtaining employment with wages that exceed the ALICE threshold. The ALICE threshold is a measure of wages needed to meet all basic needs. Additional information is available at www.unitedforalice.org. All TANF applicants are screened at application to determine whether they must be referred for participation in VIEW. Nonexempt individuals are referred to VIEW workers within a month of case approval and assessed for participation within 30 days of referral.

Agreement of Personal Responsibility - The agreement of personal responsibility must be signed by all VIEW participants. It states the expectations that must be met under VIEW. If a recipient refuses to sign this agreement, then the case is closed and the recipient must reapply for benefits.

Time Limit - TANF recipients who are in VIEW may receive 24 months of cash benefits, plus a year of transitional benefits. After that, they must wait two years before they can again qualify for TANF.

VIEW Participation - Individuals must participate in VIEW, Virginia's TANF employment and training program, unless otherwise exempt. The exemptions are:

- (1) Any individuals, including all minor caretakers, under 16 years of age;
- (2) Any individual at least 16, but no more than 19 years of age, who is enrolled full-time in elementary or secondary school, including vocational or technical school programs. The vocational or technical school must be equivalent to secondary school;
- (3) Any individual unable to participate because of a temporary medical condition that prevents entry into at least 20 hours per week of employment or training, as determined by a medical professional;

(4) Any individual who is incapacitated, as determined by receipt of Social Security Disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income;

(5) Any individual 60 years of age or older;

(6) Any individual who is the sole caregiver of another member of the household who is incapacitated, and whose presence is essential for the care of the member on a substantially continuous basis, shall be exempt from participation in VIEW. Incapacity is determined by receipt of Social Security Disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income. The sole other condition under which an individual may be determined incapacitated is by a written medical statement from a physician; and

(7) A parent or caretaker of a child under 12 months of age who personally provides care for the child. Per the Code of Virginia §63.2-609 and 45 CFR 261.22(c)1 and (2), this exemption is limited to a period of no more than 12 months in a lifetime.

(8) Individuals enrolled in full-time enrollment in an accredited public institution of higher education or other postsecondary school licensed or certified by the Board of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and are taking courses as part of a curriculum that leads to a postsecondary credential, such as a degree or an industry-recognized credential, certification, or license.

Supportive Services - Supportive and social services are provided to remove barriers to the individual's participation and to stabilize employment. Supportive services are provided as needed and available to support participation in orientation, assessment, approved self-initiated education, training and employment activities, or to accept or maintain employment. The provision of supportive services is contingent upon the availability of funds based on local VIEW allocations, and spending limits for services will be at the agency's discretion. Supportive services include:

(1) Child care;

(2) Transportation, including certain vehicle repairs;

(3) Program and/or work-related expenses, such as fees for birth certificates, license fees, registration fees, graduation fees, picture ID costs, uniforms or other clothing and shoes, safety equipment and tools, and car repairs; and

(4) Emergency intervention, such as provision of food, payment of utilities, or other items necessary for the participant to gain or keep employment or to participate in other work activities;

(5) Medical and dental services, such as fees for dentures, glasses, orthopedic shoes, and other items required prior to entry into jobs, work-sites, or other components for a client that has a disability, as determined by a medical professional, which affects program participation. Medical and dental services are paid for with state funds.

If supportive services are essential for participation, neither the participant nor the agency can provide them, and no alternatives are available, the participant will not be sanctioned for noncompliance. In these situations, the participant is placed in an inactive status (for up to 90

days) to prevent the clock from counting against the VIEW 24-month time limit. It is expected that agency staff and the participant will work together to resolve any issues related to participation by the end of the 90-day timeframe.

A participant cannot be sanctioned if acceptable childcare is not available. Federal TANF regulations at section § 261.56(b) require the State to define the following four terms as they relate to determining if needed child care is available. The terms and the Commonwealth's definitions are as follows:

(1) "Appropriate childcare" means childcare arranged by the participant or, if the participant cannot arrange for the child's care, child care arranged by the local department of social services with a legally-operating provider. (2) "Reasonable distance" means that the travel time from the child's home to the childcare provider and the work site is generally no more than one hour, based on transportation available to the parent.

(3) "Unsuitability of informal childcare" means that the childcare arrangement does not meet the requirements for relative care in the Virginia Department of Social Services Child Care Services policy.

(4) "Affordable child care arrangements" means the cost of the childcare is less than or equal to the payment amounts specified in the Virginia Department of Social Services Child Care Services policy.

For purposes of the above definitions, the term "legally-operating provider" includes all providers regulated by the Virginia Department of Social Services' Division of Licensing, city-approved providers, county-approved providers, local agency-approved providers, federally approved providers, and providers who are legally exempt from regulation based upon the number and ages of children in care or because the provider is a relative caring only for relatives.

Failure to Meet the Requirements of VIEW - Recipients who fail to participate in work activities or to comply with the terms and conditions of their personal responsibility agreements receive a sanction. If an individual is sanctioned, her family's entire TANF benefit amount is reduced by 100 percent for a fixed period, or until the individual complies with the terms of the sanction, whichever is longer. Participants who have been sanctioned are not entitled to supportive services unless these services are required to maintain the participant's employment.

For a first sanction, the TANF grant is suspended for one month or until compliance, whichever is longer; for a second sanction, the TANF grant is suspended for three months or until compliance, whichever is longer; and for any subsequent sanctions, the TANF grant is suspended for six months or until compliance, whichever is longer.

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

Clients are placed in an approved work activity immediately after being enrolled and assessed. Work activities include job search, job readiness, subsidized employment, unsubsidized employment, community work experience, public service, on-the-job training, job skills training, and vocational education.

An individual is considered participating in a work activity if:

- (1) Employed in unsubsidized employment of 30 hours a week or more, including on-the-job training;
- (2) Employed less than 30 hours per week and also fully participating in assigned work activities designed to help her obtain full-time employment;
- (3) Unemployed but participating in an assigned work activity. The work activity may be job search, job readiness, vocational education, job skills training, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, community work experience, or public service.

After an initial assessment, an Activity and Service Plan is developed with the participant that outlines the activities that the participant will engage in. All hours of participation must be verified. The case manager follows up with those that fail to participate appropriately to determine the cause of the failure to participate, and determines the appropriate action depending upon the circumstances. The follow-up action could include providing accommodations or may result in sanctioning the participant.

Monitoring occurs at several different levels. Local departments of social services are primarily responsible for ensuring that recipients appropriately participate. Work participation rate reports are made available to local agency staff and supervisors for monitoring purposes. There are five regional social services offices in the Commonwealth. Each regional office has a TANF Program Consultant that is responsible for monitoring local agency performance including conducting case readings and requiring corrective action plans, if needed. This monitoring includes monitoring of the placement of TANF recipients in work activities and the local department's work participation rate. State staff monitor local performance regarding the employment and training program, VIEW.

Earned Income Disregard - Earnings up to 100 percent of the federal poverty level for one-parent families and up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level for two-parent families are disregarded in the computation of the amount of assistance.

Hardship Exceptions to the Two-Year Limit - Virginia has several hardship exceptions that extend a client's TANF benefits beyond the two-year time limit. Benefits may be extended for a period of three months to one year. Virginia's hardship exceptions apply to participants who are actively seeking employment but unable to find a job, participants who lose employment due to no fault of their own, participants continuing education and training related directly to employability, and participants residing in areas of the state with unemployment rates above 10 percent. These hardships will only be granted in cases where the individual participant has satisfactorily participated during his VIEW assignments, has

not been sanctioned more than once during the 24 months of participation, and has not quit a job without good cause.

Transitional Child Care and Transportation - Virginia will provide up to one year of transitional childcare and transportation assistance to some VIEW clients who are no longer eligible for TANF cash assistance benefits. Transitional childcare and transportation benefits are available to those former clients who are working or participating in education or training activities. Transitional childcare is paid from Child Care and Development Block Grant funds. The financial eligibility criteria for transitional childcare assistance are as follows:

Income eligibility thresholds for child care assistance account for variations in the local cost of living index by metropolitan statistical areas. Localities which are not considered part of a metropolitan statistical area are grouped in one of three metropolitan statistical areas, based on their geographical proximity.

Transitional transportation services are paid from TANF and State funds. Families who participated in VIEW are deemed eligible for transitional transportation based on their prior TANF eligibility.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia will take reasonable and necessary steps to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal government. Information about applicants or recipients will be used or disclosed only for purposes directly connected with the administration of public assistance and related services which cannot be offered without such information. The safeguards shall not prevent the State agency from furnishing a Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer with the current address of any recipient in a manner consistent with state and federal laws (Code of Virginia § 63.2-102).

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia currently has several other initiatives underway to reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock births and teen pregnancy, with the goal of reducing the out-of-wedlock birth rate to 34.3% by the end of 2025.

The Commonwealth has several TANF-funded initiatives aimed at preventing and reducing out of wedlock pregnancies.

Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC)

Description of Program – This program increases education about reproductive choices available to women throughout the Commonwealth and aims to expand access to long-acting

reversible contraception. The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose 3.

Resource Mothers

The Virginia Department of Health administers the Resource Mothers Program. Studies have found that siblings of pregnant and parenting teens are at higher risk for early premarital sexual activity, out-of-wedlock births, and school dropout than siblings of non-pregnant/non-parenting teens. Adult mentoring relationships, involvement in community activities, and establishment of future goals have been found to counterbalance the pressure towards risky sexual behaviors and other negative behaviors. The Virginia Resource Mothers' home visitors working with pregnant and parenting teens will refer younger non-pregnant sisters, ages 9-15, to a mentoring program.

Health promotion, avoidance of non-marital sexual activity, connection to the community, development of leadership skills, and identification of future goals will be encouraged through the mentoring relationships and through community projects. Goals are designed to meet the TANF program objectives to "prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

Boys and Girls Clubs

Through the Boys and Girls Clubs, programming is focused on the expansion of community-based prevention and mentoring programs to improve school readiness and to alleviate conditions that lead to teen pregnancy. It also works with parents to help identify family/child strengths and barriers and encourages parental support of positive academic behaviors and attitudes.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The department promotes on-going efforts to provide education and training about the problems related to statutory rape, accessible by law enforcement and education staff. Statutory rape laws in Virginia are enforced throughout the state and prevention is a large part of the strategy to reducing statutory rape is preventative work. The Virginia Department of Health conducts an educational program to increase awareness of statutory rape. The Department of Health also maintains a website that provides information statutory rape prevention, including relevant state laws, advice for adolescents, and educational resources. (www.vdh.virginia.gov/statutory-rape-prevention) The Department of Criminal Justice Services offers training called "Males and Violence: Engaging Men and Boys as Survivors, Advocates and Change Agents" which brings together mental health clinicians, social workers, victim advocates, and law enforcement. This included training on engaging men and boys in prevention efforts. The Division of Child Support Enforcement continues to make presentations that target men about the consequences of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Implementation of policy and procedures focused on changing the State Code to make misuse of TANF benefits unlawful, publicizing the law change, putting the onus on the recipient to properly use TANF benefits, and notifying vendors. In the 2013 session of the Virginia General Assembly, House Bill 1577 was passed and signed into law on April 3, 2013. The legislation became effective statewide on July 1, 2013 and imposes greater restrictions than set forth in the federal Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.

“§ 63.2—621. Restrictions on use of TANF cash assistance. Recipients of TANF benefits pursuant to this chapter shall not access TANF cash benefits through an electronic benefit transaction (i) for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, lottery tickets, or sexually explicit visual materials as defined in § 18.2-374.1; (ii) in any transaction in any (a) government store established for the sale of alcoholic beverages, (b) establishment in which pari-mutuel wagering or charitable gaming is conducted, or (c) establishment in which tattooing or body-piercing, as defined in § 54.1-700, is performed for hire or consideration; or (iii) in any establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers or other individuals connected with the business appear nude or partially nude.”

The change in the law was publicized by a press release, and the information about the law was published in newspapers throughout the state.

Local TANF eligibility staff are trained on the policy as part of new worker training. The restrictions are explained to all applicants for assistance. Virginia requires a protective payee to receive and properly dispense TANF funds if a person is reported as having attempted to mispend TANF benefits. Posters, which explained the restrictions in both English and Spanish, have been distributed for display in 120 local departments of social services. The Department of Social Services website has information about the restrictions.

In Virginia, the sale of liquor is restricted to state-owned and operated liquor stores operated by The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). The ABC was alerted to the federal and state laws so that cashiers at ABC stores are aware of the restrictions and any attempted misuse of the TANF debit card.

Though there are no identifiable organizations that represent adult-oriented entertainment venues, we contacted the Retail Merchants Association as well as the Chamber of Commerce to alert them to the restrictions.

Recipients of TANF cash assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance. All recipients have the choice of receiving benefits by direct deposit, debit card, or check. While most participants receive benefits by debit card, participants can choose to receive benefits via direct deposit into a bank account or by check. This decision is the preference of the

participant. If a participant chooses to bypass the no-charge option of receiving payments via direct deposit and chooses to receive benefits via the GOCard, there is a significant network of automated teller machines (ATMs) that include non-restricted ATMs in every county and city in the Commonwealth. The GOCard is also used for the delivery of unemployment compensation benefits and child support enforcement payments. For clients that opt to receive benefits via debit card, benefits may be withdrawn with no fees.

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Recipients of TANF may access assistance with no fees or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance. Such information is made publicly available. If a participant chooses to bypass the no-charge option of receiving payments via direct deposit and chooses to receive benefits via the GOCard, there is a significant network of automated teller machines (ATMs) that include non-restricted ATMs in every county and city in the Commonwealth. The GoCard is also used for the delivery of unemployment compensation benefits and child support enforcement payments. For clients that opt to receive benefits via debit card, benefits may be withdrawn with no fees. Minimal fees do apply, however, in certain limited situations.

A recipient may use the debit card to make purchases at merchants as long as MasterCard is accepted. In addition, at the merchant's discretion, the recipient may receive cash back. There is no fee for this transaction.

A participant may receive cash from an ATM that accepts MasterCard. There are no fees for withdrawals from network (MoneyPass) ATMs. There are over 600 MoneyPass ATMs in Virginia. For out of network ATMs, there is no fee for two ATM withdrawals each month. After two withdrawals at non-network ATMs, there is a fee of \$1.00 per withdrawal. Participants may make two free withdrawals per month from a teller in a bank location that displays the MasterCard logo. A printed copy of the fee structure as well as an explanation of how to withdraw benefits at no charge is provided to all newly approved recipients of TANF. The information is also available at GoProgram.com.

I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia does not treat families who move into the Commonwealth differently from current Virginia residents regarding the receipt of TANF benefits.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia provides TANF benefits to all aliens who meet the federal TANF definition of a "qualified alien" with the exception of those categories of qualified aliens who entered on or after August 22, 1996, who are barred from receiving assistance for five years beginning on the date of the alien's entry into the United States with a status within the meaning of the term "qualified alien." The Commonwealth provides assistance to all alien groups permitted to receive benefits under federal TANF law and regulations.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia has established procedures for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of applicants and recipients of public assistance. There shall be no discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital, parental, or birth status, or disability by State or local agencies in the administration of any public assistance program.

Virginia continues to offer an administrative fair hearing procedure for any aggrieved TANF recipient. The Department of Social Services has established objective standards for providing benefits and services, determining eligibility, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment. Applicants and recipients who believe they have been adversely affected by a decision concerning public assistance or needed services may request to have the decision reconsidered in accordance with Code of Virginia § 63.2—517, 63.2—518 and 63.2—519. Recipients have the right to appeal any action or inaction affecting eligibility, benefit or service determination or condition of payment and are advised of this right with each adverse action notice.

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR
2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

The Department intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment providing direct care in a long—term facility or in other elder care occupations. At the beginning of participation in the VIEW program, the caseworker conducts an identification and evaluation of the participant's job readiness skills, occupational skills and interests, education, work history, and family/life circumstances; a determination of the participant's functional literacy; an initial identification of the client's employment/educational goal(s) and the types of program assignments that may be completed throughout the client's VIEW

participation; an evaluation of supportive service needs; and an evaluation of other issues that may clearly affect program participation or employment.

Upon completion of the assessment, the case manager, along with the participant will develop an Activity and Service Plan which details: the participant's assignments, responsibilities of the participant and the agency, and the supportive services needed by the individual to comply with program requirements. If during the assessment the client expresses an interest, or prior experience in the elder care field, the case manager will work with the participant to develop the appropriate resources to allow the participant to pursue that goal. This includes such activities as vocational education and subsidized employment.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

The following are programs for which the State claims MOE expenditures.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance - The TANF assistance unit consists of the parents and their children living with them who meet the non-financial requirements of eligibility, such as age, relationship, and citizenship. In constructing the assistance unit, the following persons must be included if living with the child for whom TANF has been requested: the natural or adoptive parents and any blood-related or adopted siblings. Parents or children who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or are statutorily ineligible for TANF under other provisions of law cannot be included in the assistance unit.

Children and parents who are excluded from the assistance unit for failure to follow program rules, such as not providing a social security number for a child or parent or refusing to cooperate with the Division of Child Support Enforcement are included in the assistance unit for purposes of determining whether the family meets financial eligibility requirements; however, their needs are not included for purposes of determining the amount of the family's monthly benefits.

Additional eligibility requirements applicable to children:

- The child must be under age 18, or if age 18 must be attending school;
- The child must be living in the home of a parent or other relative except for temporary absences of up to 60 consecutive days; and
- The child must reside in Virginia.

Additional eligibility requirements applicable to the family:

To qualify for assistance, the assistance unit's countable income must pass a gross income screening and a net income screening at the standard of assistance, based on the unit's size.

Once the family is determined to be financially needy, the monthly payment is calculated. Income is counted prospectively in determining financial eligibility and the monthly payment amount.

Clients who do not meet an exemption are required to participate in a work activity. Once a family member agrees, in writing, to participate in the employment program, the unit's earnings are evaluated in comparison to 100% of the federal poverty level, based on assistance unit size.

Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) - The VIEW Program is the employment and training component of the TANF Program. VIEW requires able-bodied parents with children over the age of 12 months to participate. Most unemployed participants are assigned initially to job search. If not employed at the end of job search, participants are placed in another work activity. VIEW participants receive earned to allow eligibility up to 100% of the federal poverty limit and are eligible to receive income disregards and transitional support services including childcare and transportation. After the 24-month time limit is reached, the family is ineligible for TANF cash assistance for 24 months.

Childcare Program - Childcare services are those activities that assist eligible families in the arrangement and purchase of childcare for children. It also includes activities that promote parental choice, consumer education to help parents make informed choices about childcare, activities to enhance health and safety standards, and activities that increase and enhance childcare and early childhood resources in the community.

The eligible family includes at least one child under the age of 13 or a child under the age of 18 if they are physically or mentally incapable of caring for themselves or if they are subject to court supervision, and there is a need for child care to support employment, approved education or training or for reasons related to child protective services, and the family meets income eligibility requirements for the locality in which they live (150%, 160%, 185%, or 250% of the federal poverty level).

Virginia Pre-school Initiative - The Virginia Pre-school Initiative provides supportive services to income-eligible families with four-year old children. Localities that participate must ensure that the program operates at least six hours per day and conforms to the school calendar year to ensure the program meets the needs of working parents. Families participating in the Virginia Pre-school Initiative may receive assistance with Early Childhood Education and Development, Social Services, Children's Health Assessments and Parent Education. To be considered an eligible family, the family has to have a dependent child and income under 200% of the federal poverty level.

Family Preservation Services - Preservation Services include pre-placement prevention services designed to help children remain in the home, services to provide follow-up care to families when a child is returned from foster care, and services designed to improve parenting skills. To be considered an eligible family, the family has to have a dependent child and income under 200% of the federal poverty level.

Domestic Violence Services -Domestic violence services include education, help in obtaining needed resources, access to emergency shelter and development of safety plans. The program

makes available hotlines, crisis intervention, advocacy for victims and children, support groups, emergency transportation, and community education. All victims are eligible for local Domestic Violence Services, with eligibility for specific services based on income. Referrals are made to the local DSS agencies for determination of TANF eligibility.

VIEW Transitional Payment (VTP) -VIEW participants who are employed at least 30 hours per week and lose TANF eligibility are eligible to receive a monthly payment to assist with employment expenses and to encourage greater employment retention. VTP eligibility lasts for 12 months and participants may earn up to 200% of the federal poverty limit.

A. TANF Certifications

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—	
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	
6.i. screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes
6.ii. refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6.iii. waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.	Yes

Employment and Training Programs Under The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
(Programs Authorized Under Section 6(D)(4) Of The Food And Nutrition Act Of 2008 (7 U.S.C.
2015(D)(4)))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan: [27] 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(6)

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED;

Components by Category (Non-Education, Non-Work Components; Education Components; Work Components)

The SNAP E&T components that are being offered are based on the Annual Plans that were submitted by Virginia's 36 SNAP E&T agencies and 5 SNAP E&T 50-50 partners. SNAP E&T agencies are allocated funds, state and federal, at the beginning of the State's Fiscal Year.

These funds are accessed and drawn down by agencies on a monthly basis through the Locality Automated System Expenditure Reimbursement system (LASER) for reimbursement for SNAP E&T expenses. Virginia's SNAP E&T 50-50 partners are required to submit monthly or quarterly invoices to the Virginia Department of Social Services for reimbursement of SNAP E&T expenses. SNAP E&T components that are offered in Virginia are listed below:

Supervised Job Search

Description: Supervised Job Search are activities that occur in state-approved locations or systems where job-search activities are directly supervised and the timing/activities are tracked. This component requires participants to make a predetermined number of inquiries to prospective employers over a specified period of time. Examples of state approved locations may include but are not limited to American Job Centers (one-stops), Public Libraries, Employment Service Organizations (ESO's), 50-50 Providers and use of software/electronic platforms which track & time job search activities. Supervised Job Search may be self-paced and can occur remotely or in person, but engagement with case management for review has to occur at least monthly. Supervised Job search activities must have a direct link to increase employment opportunities.

All Supervised Job search activities must have a direct link to increase employment opportunities. The criteria to assign clients to supervised Job Search is based on evaluating that a reasonable success will be achieved in obtaining successful employment. Employment Service Workers (ESW) assess the assignment of each person's suitability for different jobs based on Labor Market Information (LMI) and developing sector strategy approaches to increasing a deep understanding of the interrelationships between business competitiveness and the workforce needs of the targeted industry. The goal of supervised job search should be to prepare for specific in-demand-high wage occupations. Supervised Job Search should be focused on helping clients identify personal goals, overcome personal barriers and develop leadership skills leading to the effective identification of employment opportunities.

Estimated Annual Component Costs: \$1,257,454; Cost per participant: \$799

Job Search Training

Description: This component will enhance the job readiness of participants by providing job seeking techniques and methods to increase motivation and self-confidence.

Job Search Training includes activities that may consist of employability skill assessments, employability training, job placement services, or other direct training or support activities, including educational programs to expand the job search abilities or employability of the registrant. The Employment and Training Annual Plan must describe whether the local department will utilize the Job Search Training component. If utilized, the process must be described and may include the following:

Group or individually coordinated job search training activities may consist of employability assessments, occupational exploration, training, and counseling in personal preparation for employability, and training and counseling in techniques for identifying and pursuing

employment opportunities (including information on local emerging and demand occupations and job placement services).

Component Cost: \$2,409,750.00; Cost Per Participant: \$3213

Job Retention Services

Description: SNAP E&T agencies choosing to offer the job retention component must provide at least 30 days and no more than 90 days of job retention services. Job Retention support must be directly related to a participant's continued efforts to maintain employment and offer the participant the ability to advance living wages careers.

The criteria for receiving Job Retention Services are determined upon the needs of the participant once he/she enters employment as long as the employment was obtained while he/she was receiving other SNAP E&T services. Once employment has been verified, a Reassessment will be conducted and the participant will be assigned to Job Retention Services for a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 90 days.

Cost of component: \$1,123,500; Cost per participant: \$3,210

Education

Description: SNAP E&T participants are offered the opportunity to be referred to the Virginia Department of Education ABE/GED program if basic skill remediation is identified through the SNAP E&T assessment process. Formalized relationships in terms of MOU's exist between LDSS and Adult Basic Education Providers. VDSS is a mandatory partner alongside WIOA Title II providers which include Adult and Base Education (ABE) – Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). This is embodied under the Commonwealths of Virginia's Combined Workforce Plan. Wrap around services are coordinated with LDSS's to ensure seamless service delivery to SNAP E&T participants assigned to this component. Credentials obtained after the completion of the EPB include the following:

Adult Basic Education (ABE) – ABE programs are designed to help adults improve their skills in reading, writing, mathematics, language acquisition and other basic skills. Students working below the ninth-grade level receive help to transition to Adult Secondary Education.

GED – Currently, the only Virginia board-approved HSE examination is the GED test, which was developed to enable persons who have not graduated from high school to demonstrate the attainment of abilities normally associated with completion of a high school program of study. GED Testing Service is a joint venture of the American Council and Pearson.

SNAP E&T is not charged for Adult Education costs. Cost for participation is provided by other sources both state and federal. **Career/Technical Education Programs or other Vocational Training**

Description: This component provides training in a workforce-based, high-wage/high demand skill or trade that will improve employability of participants and allow the participant to move directly into employment or will provide skill enhancement to increase employment advancement opportunities.

Assignments to Educational or Vocational Training programs are usually determined based on the results of the initial or ongoing assessments. If it is determined, during the Assessment, that the participant has the basic educational skill level required for enrolling in a technical training program, a referral will then be made to the institution of higher learning for further assessments. If it is determined that the participant would then be a good candidate for vocational training, the Plan of Participation will be updated to reflect assignment to Vocational Training. Technical education opportunities are available to all participants who have demonstrated desire and skill competency to complete an educational component. SNAP E&T partners such as the Virginia Community College System determine admission requirements for each program.

Component cost \$14,000,000.00; Cost per participant: \$1,854.30

Work Experience: Work Activity

Description: In this component, participants gain work experience and new job skills through unpaid work in a public, private non-profit or for-profit agency. The primary focus of Work Experience: Work Activity is to help the participant develop good work habits, additional job skills, positive work attitudes and an understanding of the employee-employer relationship. Participants may be offered a Work Experience opportunity if they are preparing to enter the workforce and it is determined that additional guidance is required to yield sufficient employment opportunities.

Assignments to Work Experience are determined based on the results of ongoing Assessments. If it is determined, during the assessment processes, that the participant has a poor work history, or has been unsuccessful in their supervised job search attempts, then the participant would then be a good candidate for Work Experience. Following the Initial and ongoing Assessments and based upon the information gathered and analyzed, the Employment Service Worker and the participant will decide if Work Experience is the best component activity for the participant based on participants strengths and goals.

Component Cost: \$800,000.00; Cost per participant: \$2,667.00

2. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

Operating Budget and Budget Narrative

Virginia, FY 24

Operating Budget

State Name	VIRGINIA	Fiscal Year	FY2024
Section B - Operating Budget			
<i>Instructions for completion: Complete all cells, as applicable that are shown in gray. The cells that are blue are either being prepopulated from contracts or partnerships table or will automatically calculate and populate some of the cells that are included in the Funding Sources table. the Non-Federal Share will include any State/local funds or funds being provided through third-party partnerships. Federal share will include the 100 percent Federal E&T funds and the federal share of the 50/50 funds.</i>			
Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
I. Direct Program and Admin Costs			
Salary/Wages (State agency only)	\$ 246,148.00	\$ 246,148.00	\$ 492,296.00
Fringe Benefits - provide approved fringe benefit rate percentage in line 8 below. Or provide total fringe benefits in line 9 if multiple rates are used by the State agency			
27.15%	\$ 43,449.00	\$ 79,636.00	\$ 123,085.00
Fringe Benefits -	\$ 67,990.00	\$ 67,990.00	\$ 135,980.00
Non-capital equipment	\$ 71,300.00	\$ 71,300.00	\$ 142,600.00
Materials	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00
Travel	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Building Space	\$ 15,560.00	\$ 15,560.00	\$ 31,120.00
Equipment and other capital expenditures			\$ -
<i>Subtotal - State agency costs only</i>	\$ 418,498.00	\$ 418,498.00	\$ 836,996.00
<i>Contractual Costs: Is prepopulating from Contract-Partnerships Table, must not include Participant reimbursements.</i>	\$ 9,001,281.51	\$ 10,641,619.51	\$ 19,642,901.02
<i>County Administered Program Admin Cost, if applicable: Is prepopulating from County Admin Budget.</i>			
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	\$ 9,419,779.51	\$ 11,060,117.51	\$ 20,479,897.02

State Name	VIRGINIA	Fiscal Year	FY2024
II. Indirect Costs: <i>Indirect costs are only calculated on the subtotal of State agency costs only.</i>			
Indirect Costs - provide approved indirect cost rate percentage in line 23 below.			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Indirect Costs - using Federally Approved Cost Allocation Plan.			
Federally Approved Cost Allocated Costs - State agency only.	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$ 48,000.00
County Administered Allocated Costs (only applicable to County Administered Programs)			
Total Allocated Costs based on Cost Allocation Plan	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00	\$ 48,000.00
III. In-kind contribution			
State in-kind contribution	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Administrative Costs	\$ 9,443,779.51	\$ 11,084,117.51	\$ 20,527,897.02
IV. Participant Reimbursements			
Dependent Care (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)			\$ -
Transportation & Other costs (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care	\$ -		\$ -

State Name	VIRGINIA	Fiscal Year	FY2024
Total Participant Reimbursements	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00
V. Total Costs	\$ 9,943,779.51	\$ 11,584,117.51	\$ 21,527,897.02

Budget Narrative and Justification Table J.I. Direct Costs

Salary/Wages: List staff positions in FTE and time spent on the project. Example: E&T Program Manager - \$60,000 x .50 FTE = \$30,000 5 E&T Counselors - \$25,000 x 1.00 FTEs x 5 = \$125,000	1-Manager (50%), 5 consultants (100%) at an average salary of \$70,328 , (7*\$70,328 = \$492,296
Fringe Benefits: If charging fringe and benefits to the E&T program, provide the approved fringe rate.	Fringes include retirement, retirement, FICA, Group and medical insurance, and other benefits. Health insurance, used leave, and deferred compensation vary for each staff and is not based on salary. We do not use an approved benefit rate as a blanket.
Contractual Costs: All contracts and partnerships should be included in the “contracts and partnerships” matrix of the E&T State Plan Operating Budget Workbook. Briefly summarize the type of services contractors/partners will provide, such as direct E&T program services, IT services, consulting, etc.	All 50-50 contracts will provide direct E&T program services to E&T participants.
Non-capital Equipment and Supplies: Describe non-capital equipment and supplies to be purchased with E&T funds.	This estimated cost includes annual IT charges, software, telephones, clerical services, management services, etc. FY23 charges were \$176,417. It is estimated cost will be reduced in FY24.

Materials: Describe materials to be purchased with E&T funds.	Estimated supplies and materials based on previous years expenditures.
Travel & Staff Training: Describe the purpose and frequency of staff travel charged to the E&T program. This line item should not include E&T participant reimbursements for transportation. Include planned staff training, including registration costs for training that will be charged to the E&T grant.	Division Director has implemented a staff training budget in all programs. These are to be used as conference attendance and training opportunities. We are budgeting and estimated \$5,000 for each in FY24. (6-staff * \$5,000 = \$30,000)
Building/Space: If charging building space to the E&T program, describe the method used to calculate space value.	Building rent for the agency is based on total staff count devised into total monthly rent. Since the agency will be moving in January 24, the annual projection is \$432.22 monthly. (6 * \$432.22 *12 = \$31,120)
Equipment & Other Capital Expenditures: Describe equipment and other capital expenditures over \$5,000 per item that will be charged to the E&T grant. (In accordance with 2 CFR 200.407, prior written approval from FNS is required.)	N/A

Indirect Costs. The agency uses a Public Assistance Cost Allocation Plan (PACAP) that is approved by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/Division of Cost Allocation for its indirect costs.

Participant Reimbursements (Non-Federal plus 50 percent Federal reimbursement). Participant reimbursements are offered through the LDSS and Third Partner Partnerships. These include: transportation, childcare, work-related supplies/testing or other as determined by policy, housing/utility support as outlined in policy. Our partners also work with LDSS to ensure that participant reimbursements are available and/or support services are available through community partners at no charge to the program or the SNAP participant. As part of the contractual development process for vendors, we require them to submit a work plan and budget. Prior to approval, we ask for amendments as needed. The participant reimbursement costs are amounts that are the actual contracted amounts which are based upon expenditures from prior years, the number of participants to be served, and the nature of the services to be provided.

3. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;

SNAP E&T participation in Virginia is voluntary for all work registrants including ABAWDs (able-bodied adults without dependents). Ordinarily, the categories and types of individuals that would be exempt from SNAP E&T participation would be: (1) Individuals under 18 or over 59 years of age; (2) Individuals who are pregnant; (3) Individuals receiving TANF; (4) Individuals responsible for a child under 6 years of age, or an incapacitated person; (5) Individuals in drug or alcohol treatment programs; and (6) Students enrolled half-time in an accredited educational institution.

4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Currently, Virginia's focus is on the SNAP E&T enrollments of SNAP recipients who wish to volunteer and are considered work-ready, or those volunteers who would benefit from vocational training and/or education in the pursuit of their employment goals. Work ready individuals should possess the foundational skills necessary to be minimally qualified for a specific occupation as determined through a job analysis or occupational profile.

5. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Estimated Participant Levels

State Name (choose from drop down list)	VIRGINIA	Fiscal Year	FY2024
Estimated Participant Levels <i>Instructions for completion: Complete the table below projecting participation in E&T for the upcoming Federal FY. In determining the estimated participation, it is important to be as accurate as possible. As appropriate, projections should be based upon actual figures from the current Federal FY.</i>			
Work registrants	Instructions	Examples	State Exemptions
Anticipated number of work registrants	This is an unduplicated count. Take into consideration the expected number of work registrants in the State on October 1st as well as the number of new work registrants expected	100,000	Number/percentage 201,188

throughout the Federal Fiscal Year.

List State exemptions from E&T and the number of work registrants expected to be exempted under each category.

A State operating a voluntary program would show that all work registrants are exempt. Alternatively, a State may exempt only certain populations from SNAP E&T participation, such as individuals experiencing homelessness.

List name of exemption in Column D and Number in Column E, rows 7-11. If additional rows are needed, right click last row and choose "insert".

1. All work registrants – 100,000 (voluntary program example) OR:

All work registrants (voluntary State program)

201,188

*Pregnancy - 1,000
Geographic Area - 2,000
100,000 (voluntary program)*

Total estimated number of work registrants exempt from mandatory E&T

Sum of exemptions

201,188

Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T

100%

100%

ABAWDs

Anticipated number of ABAWDs

6,500

267,000

Anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the State

0

27,000

Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be exempted

250

42,000

under the State's ABAWD discretionary exemption allowance.			
Number of potential at-risk ABAWDs expected in the State	6,250		198,000
E&T participants			
Anticipated number of mandatory E&T participants	0		-
Anticipated number of voluntary E&T participants	2,000		8,500
Total anticipated number of E&T participants	2,000		8,500
Anticipated number of ABAWDs expected to serve in E&T	This number should be a subset of the total expected participants.	500	2,975
Participant reimbursements			
Number of individuals expected to receive participant reimbursements	Insert number from table E.1. Item I.	2,000	5,000
Percentage of participants expected to receive reimbursements	100%		59%

6. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED;

SNAP E&T operates locally at 36 out of the 120 agencies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Due to the program being voluntary in Virginia, each locality has the option of deciding of whether they would like to become a SNAP E&T agency based on funding, locality (rural vs. city) and available community resources.

SNAP E&T Full Service LDSS (36 agencies): Albemarle County, City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Bedford County, City of Bristol, Brunswick County, City of Charlottesville, City of Chesapeake, Chesterfield/Colonial Heights, City of Danville, Fairfax County, City of Galax, Grayson County, City of Hampton, Henry-Martinsville, King and Queen County, City of Manassas, Montgomery County, City of Newport News, City of Norfolk, City of Norton, City of Petersburg, Pittsylvania County, City of Portsmouth, Prince George County, Prince William County, City of Richmond, Roanoke County, Shenandoah Valley, Smyth County, Stafford County, Surry County, Tazewell County, City of Virginia Beach, City of Winchester, and Wise County.

SNAP E&T components offered for FFY 2024 include the following;

1. Supervised Job Search (SJS)
2. Job Search Training (JST)
3. Work Experience: (Work Activity - WA)

-
4. Education: GED (Adult Basic Education (EPB
 5. Vocational Training/Career/Technical (EPC)
 6. Job Retention (JR).

NOTE:

SNAP E&T COMPONENT OFFERINGS MAY DIFFER BETWEEN THE 37 SNAP E&T LOCALITIES, BUT EACH AGENCY MUST OFFER AT LEAST ONE QUALIFYING COMPONENT AS IDENTIFIED IN THE SNAP E&T STATE PLAN.

7. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

Information for work registrant data is provided by the VDSS Office of Research and Planning utilizing the source system- VaCMS. This is a count of distinct VACMS distinct individual id numbers of eligible work registrants on October 1. The individual id number is an exclusive number assigned to each individual customer. The numbers are not duplicated. The process involves confirming or identifying SNAP cases in application status that were identified during the reporting period. Secondly, next steps involved identifying eligibility begin and end dates. Thirdly, identifying new registrants based on individual program status and work registration requirement codes. These are unduplicated numbers as assigned through the SNAP eligibility process in our case management system. To produce this report, the data from the VaCMS system is loaded into ESP Data Mart. Aggregation rules are utilized with reference to specific section headings from a sample report. The aggregation rules reference business names from the VaCMS system. Once this is completed the number of work registrants receiving SNAP is reported on October 1st of the new fiscal year.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS-583;

The Quarterly Form FNS-583 is due 45 days after the end of each quarter. To ensure that accurate information is being collected on each work registrant, The Office of Research and Planning produces a report which generates the numbers for each category:

- Number of work registrants receiving SNAP on October 1 of the new fiscal year.
- Number of new work registrants
- Number of ABAWD applicants and recipients participating in qualifying components
- Number of all other applicants and recipients (including ABWADs invoices in non-qualifying activities) participating in components
- Number of ABAWD case months used under the State agency's 15 percent exemption allowance

Number of individuals who participated in each component (Supervised Job Search, Job Search Training, Community Work Experience, Education, and Vocational/Occupational

Training): **This is completed only for the 4th quarter and numbers are not reported for ABAWD due to the waiver.**

Each Individual is counted one time per component (unduplicated) where the component end date is on or after the start date of the FFY. The participant information for SNAP 50-50 participants is also consolidated within this information and is unduplicated as well. The Office of Research and Planning provides the data for SNAP 50-50 since this information is not available in VaCMS. The 50-50 data is collected from each of the vendors and kept within a shared spreadsheet.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);

The number of work registrants is available through a report in VaCMS. A monthly report displays the number of work registrants in each local department of social services. Working with the Office of Research and Planning, reports are generated which break down the number of registrants per month to ensure that there is non-duplication. At the close of the Federal Fiscal Year, the generated reports count each person whose referral has been assigned 'Assessment Complete' or 'Activity Created' once per component group. Each individual is counted one time per component where the component end date is on or after the start date of the FFY (Oct 1) and the component begin date precedes the last day of the FFY (Sept. 30).

10. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;

The Virginia SNAP E&T program is directly supervised at the state level by the Workforce Services Unit and is responsible for establishing E&T policies, 50-50 contracts, administration and monitoring (agencies and providers). The local departments of social services are responsible for the administration of their program at the county/city level. The E&T program at the state and local level is separate from the SNAP certification unit. The SNAP E&T Manager and SNAP Manager meet and communicate to provide updates of each program that is to be shared with their prospective teams. Pertinent information is shared with the LDSS and 50-50 vendors through emails, quarterly meetings (virtually

through WebEx), state-wide conferences and VDSS Broadcasts (internal communication system).

Workforce Services maintains the position that the Eligibility Workers perform an integral role in screening and referring participants to the SNAP E&T VaCMS ESP Queue. The screening, eligibility and the referral process to SNAP E&T begins with the Eligibility Worker or Benefit Program Specialists (BPS). The process begins by screening individuals and individuals to the Employment Service Program- SNAPET (ESP Module). Eligibility Workers (EW) determine the work registration status for each household member. The EW is required to record any member as registered if the member does not meet a work registration exemption. SNAP sub-recipients who choose to volunteer are also screened by the Eligibility Workers by answering a series of screening questions and referred to the SNAPET ESP Module in VaCMS.

After an individual is referred to the SNAPET ESP Module, the Employment Service Worker (ESW) pulls the client out of the ESP Queue and contacts them via phone or electronically (via email) to schedule an initial assessment. The Office of Workforce Services (WFS) has maintained a consistent position of communicating and educating Benefit Program Specialists during conference forums to have brief conversations with SNAP applicants during interview about SNAP E&T at application, reapplication and during recertification of the benefits of participating in SNAP E&T. Individuals in the household who are evaluated by the EW who do not have a Work Registration Exemption or a Work Requirement Exemption are referred electronically via the Virginia Case Management System (VaCMS) to the Employment Service Program (ESP) module in VaCMS. If a participant is interested in the program, a warm hand-off is completed by the EW to the Employment Services Team at the LDSS to manually enroll volunteers in VaCMS to be assessed and enrolled in SNAP E&T component activities. After being enrolled in SNAP E&T, if a customer is found to be non-compliant, they are sent a notice of closure by the ESW and this is internally communicated to the BPS/EW within 10 days of the closure being sent to the customer.

In the case of Provider Determinations, Eligibility Workers, not Employment Services Workers will be responsible for ensuring that clients who are referred by E&T providers that are determined ill-suited, are notified within 10 days of receiving information from an E&T provider at the LDSS or any of the 50/50 providers. Eligibility Workers will take one of the four actions after an individual receives a provider determination:

1. Refer the individual to an appropriate employment and training component;
2. Refer the individual to an appropriate workforce partnership, if available;
3. Re-assess the individual for mental and physical fitness; or
4. Coordinate with other Federal, State, or local workforce or assistance programs to identify Employment and training opportunities.

11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING

ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION;

Working in partnership with statewide local Workforce Development Boards allows Virginia to create strategic pathways aligned with WIOA Title I service activities and a direct connection to the business community through business alliances served by the Workforce Development Boards. VDSS staff meet on a monthly basis, leading up to the state plan submission, with state workforce board members, local workforce board directors, and representatives from Virginia's workforce system agencies: Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Virginia Career Works Centers (CWC) Department of Education, and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS). Conversations center on the coordination of services at the local level and how other workforce services can be leveraged to supplement SNAP E&T services. In addition, the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal, va-career-works.myjourney.com is our state web interface connecting job seekers to state workforce resources and workforce partners. This portal allows VDSS to connect SNAP E&T participants to state agencies providing workforce services. SNAP E&T staff worked on coordination of the implementation of the referral portal in conjunction with the other partners.

The SNAP E&T 50-50 program continues to utilize quality Third-Party Partnerships to deliver employment and training programs and services. A full listing of 50-50 partners and services provided is detailed below.

Partner/Vendor	Description of Services
Equus Workforce Solutions	serves as an intermediary providing on-the-job training, soft skills development, job search training, GED & Basic Education. Partners: CARITAS, HumanKind, Ways to Work.
Goodwill Industries of the Valleys	GoodCare - offers training to help begin a career in the healthcare industry: health information, nursing, healthcare support occupations. GoodStart: Re-entry program for returning citizens.
Moving Forward Agency	Work-readiness assessment, ACT Workeys, Remedial Education, Job Skills Training, Tuition Assistance, Job Retention Services.
Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS)	Provides participants enrolled in housing program with employment and career services.
Virginia Community College System	Training: FastForward (credentials and certifications for regional in demand industries), FANTIC (funding

Partner/Vendor	Description of Services
	for FastForward training), Great Expectations (serving former foster youth), Single Stops (provides benefit eligibility determination to every student).

Based on a collaborative approach to delivering streamlined workforce development solutions, Virginia's workforce system focuses on regional labor demands and engages the training capacity of school divisions, community colleges, local Workforce Development Boards (WDB), the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Virginia Career Works Centers (CWC) through WIOA Title I, Title II Department of Education Adult Education (Adult ED) and Literacy Program, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) and (VDSS) through county and city- based (LDSS), as well as local Workforce Development Boards (WDB) and community- based organizations to get Virginia's citizens prepared for high-skilled, high-wage jobs. A broad spectrum of supportive services is provided, including childcare and transportation.

WIOA-Title I and The Virginia Department of Social Services, through the comprehensive Career Works Centers (one-stops) are operating under Memorandums of Understanding and resource sharing agreements. VDSS continues to work collaboratively to build referral pipelines and co-location agreements as well as working to leverage resources to meet the needs of the job-seeking populations served. VDSS will continue to expand these collaborative relationships as a strategic commitment to be an integral part of Virginia's workforce system.

Launched May 2020, the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal, www.virginia.myjourney.com is our state web interface connecting job seekers to state workforce resources and workforce partners. This portal allows VDSS to connect SNAP E&T participants to state agencies providing workforce services. This streamlined effort will allow Virginia to engage in qualitative data sharing about the use of our state workforce programs as we move to develop further cost-allocation methodologies and referral strategies to support our mutual clients better.

Data regarding living wage, high-demand occupations in Virginia is available through the VEC website: www.vec.virginia.gov. In-demand, occupations with healthcare, clerical and support, healthcare STEM positions, nursing, manufacturing, production, and finance. Industry credentials can be obtained through the VCCS System's Fast Forward program. SNAP E&T participants are referred for participation in Fast Forward. A wide variety of credentials are available linked to in-demand positions, including X-ray and EKG technology, pharmacy, nursing, emergency medical care, billing and coding, logistics and transportation, welding, manufacturing, skilled trades, information and technology and business, and customer service.

12. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

The federal government has only recently recognized tribes in Virginia. They have not established SNAP programs and do not operate any SNAP E&T programs. Residents on tribal lands apply and receive assistance through the local department of social services.

13. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD; AND

Not applicable. SNAP E&T participation is voluntary. Sanctions will not be applied for non-participation in SNAP E&T.

14. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

SNAP recipients participating in the E&T program are eligible to receive childcare assistance through the Virginia Child Care Subsidy Program. The copayment is determined by the household income. If the household income is \$0, then the copayment is \$0 as well.

The Commonwealth of Virginia conducts market surveys every three years and the results are received and tabulated. The data is used to determine the cost of care by locality throughout the Commonwealth and is a Federal Requirement of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). This is the major source of funding for the Virginia Child Care Subsidy Program.

Age of Child	Base payment rate	Full-time weekly base payment rate
Infant (6 months) center care	\$94 per day	\$470 per week
Toddler (18 months) center care	\$81 per day	\$405 per week
Preschooler (4 years) center care	\$70 per day	\$350 per week
School-age child (6 years) center care	\$61 per day	\$305 per week
Infant (6 months) family child care	\$75 per day	\$375 per week
Toddler (18 months) family child care	\$66 per day	\$330 per week
Preschooler (4 years) family child care	\$61 per day	\$305 per week
School-age child (6 years)	\$56 per day	\$280 per week

Source: Virginia Child Care and Development (CCDC) Plan FY2024

15. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

IV. Participant Reimbursements			
Dependent Care (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)			\$ -
Transportation & Other costs (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	500,000.00	500,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care	\$ -		\$ -
Total Participant Reimbursements	500,000.00	500,000.00	\$1,000,000.00

16. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.

Participant reimbursement needed for SNAP E&T participation	Limitations (if applicable):	Method of disbursement
Transportation	At the discretion of the partner or agency.	Reimbursement for the actual amount. Virginia pays providers directly for participants' services or provides the participant with a voucher such as a gas card. The local SNAP E&T agencies pay the amount, enter the amount in the State LASER system (accounting system) and are reimbursed against

Participant reimbursement needed for SNAP E&T participation	Limitations (if applicable):	Method of disbursement
		their allocations for supportive and purchase services. LASER is monitored at the state level and the local agencies are visited yearly to review expenditures and enrollments.
Clothing suitable for job interviews		Reimbursement for the actual amount. Virginia pays providers directly for participants' services. The local SNAP E&T agencies pay the amount, enter the amount in the state accounting system and are reimbursed against their allocations for supportive purchase services.
Licensing and bonding fees for a work experience or job placement.		
Uniforms		
Work shoes		
Purchase of an initial set of tools or equipment if requirement for placement or employment		
Fingerprinting		
Background check		
Medical services: TB testing		
Personal safety items		
Books		
Course registration fees		
Drug tests		
Eye exams and vision correction		
Dental work (routine cleaning)		
Minor auto repairs		
Test fees and training material		
Union dues		

Participant reimbursement needed for SNAP E&T participation	Limitations (if applicable):	Method of disbursement
Housing assistance including rent/utilities	Emergencies only and on a case-by-case basis. Not to exceed \$1,500.00 per occurrence and no more than two times in a 12-month period	
Broadband/Internet Access/Wi-fi		
Driver's license reinstatement	Exceptions apply to certain conviction-related suspensions and revocations. A list of these suspensions and revocations can be found at https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/webdoc/pdf/dmv39f.pdf Assistance is limited to \$300.00 per occurrence and no more than once in a 12-month period.	

B. ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]

A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3- month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:

[28] 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;
2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE;
3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS;
4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDs; INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION; AND

All ABAWDs receiving SNAP from the 36 participating agencies will be offered the opportunity to participate in the SNAP E&T program. This is a vulnerable population given the time limit and the many challenges they face including lack of a high school diploma

and low education levels, little work history, lack of job skills, and lack of reliable transportation. Each ABAWD volunteer will undergo an assessment done by SNAPE&T case manager. Activities will be assigned based on the findings of the assessment and include: job readiness, basic skill remediation, career track education/training, work experience, internship and/or other as identified.

The Commonwealth of Virginia will offer SNAPE&T services and supports to all ABAWD on a voluntary basis utilizing existing workforce infrastructure that leverages partnerships with the community college system through Fast Forward as well our partnerships with our WIOA/Title I partners through the comprehensive One-stops. Other partnerships will be identified through our SNAP 50-50 partner program.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

The following components will be offered for ABAWD work requirement: Job Search Training, Career/Technical and other Vocational Training, Basic Education, Work Experience: Work Activity and Job Retention.

C. OPTIONAL WORKFARE

State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a Combined Plan under WIOA, it must provide the following:

1. STATE AGENCIES OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBMITTING A WORKFARE PLAN MUST SUBMIT WITH THE PLAN AN OPERATING BUDGET COVERING THE PERIOD FROM THE INITIATION OF THE WORKFARE PROGRAM'S IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE TO THE CLOSE OF THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR FOR EACH YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. IN ADDITION, AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST FOR ONE FULL YEAR OF OPERATION MUST BE SUBMITTED TOGETHER WITH THE WORKFARE PLAN FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN.

2. IF WORKFARE PLANS ARE SUBMITTED BY MORE THAN ONE POLITICAL SUBDIVISION, EACH REPRESENTING THE SAME POPULATION (SUCH AS A CITY WITHIN A COUNTY), FNS WILL DETERMINE WHICH POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WILL HAVE ITS PLAN APPROVED. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A SNAP RECIPIENT BE SUBJECT TO MORE THAN ONE SNAP WORKFARE PROGRAM. IF A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION CHOOSES TO OPERATE A WORKFARE PROGRAM AND REPRESENTS A POPULATION WHICH IS ALREADY, AT LEAST IN PART, SUBJECT TO A SNAP WORKFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY ANOTHER

POLITICAL SUBDIVISION, IT MUST ESTABLISH IN ITS WORKFARE PLAN HOW SNAP RECIPIENTS WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO MORE THAN ONE SNAP WORKFARE PROGRAM.

Virginia does not participate in the Workfare program.

D. VOLUNTARY WORKFARE

State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The amount of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.

Virginia does not participate in the Workfare program.

E. COMPARABLE WORKFARE

The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.

Virginia does not participate in the Workfare program.

F. PROCESS

The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.

VDSS will submit amendments for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to planned implementation.

G. PLAN MODIFICATIONS

If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.

VDSS will make modifications if FNS requires them.

Jobs for Veterans' State Grants

A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG;

The Virginia Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program offers employment services to all eligible veterans and eligible persons in the state with the goal of assisting those parties in overcoming barriers to employment and matching veteran job seekers with the best career opportunities available. In addition, JVSG staff coordinate with businesses and develop employment opportunities for veterans. Staffing levels and assigned locations of DVOPs and LLVERs are dependent upon continued funding and periodic review of the needs of the veteran population.

JVSG staff are assigned to one of three geographic regions (North, East, and West). Each region is managed by a JVSG-funded Regional Veteran Manager who reports to the Chief of Veteran Services. Our DVOP and LLVER staff, located in more than 30 one-stop centers, in rural and metropolitan areas, offer one-on-one individualized career services and employment assistance to both veterans and employers. The JVSG staff are fully integrated into the One-stops in these regions and work hand in hand with WIOA staff to ensure Priority of Service (POS) to veteran clients. ONE-STOP partner staff conduct the necessary triage to ensure only eligible veterans, eligible persons, and other populations designated by the U.S. Secretary of Labor are seen by the DVOPS. Services are provided to eligible veterans and eligible persons by a DVOP specialist according to the needs of the veteran, any significant barrier to employment (SBE) they may possess, or if they belong to a special population as designated by the U.S. Secretary of Labor. While DVOPs see eligible veterans and eligible spouses, LLVERs advocate for all veterans seen at the ONE-STOP. Those veterans and military spouses not eligible to be case managed by a DVOP are still provided employment services by Wagner-Peyser and other ONE-STOP staff. When job-ready these veteran clients provided services by a DVOP or another ONE-STOP partner are referred to LLVERs who promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring veterans.

In addition to the One-stops, DVOP staff are assigned to 15 US Military Installations separating over 21,000 service members each year, Veteran Affairs (VA) Hospitals, homeless shelters and non-profit organizations to increase outreach efforts. JVSG staff use the state job-matching system, Virginia Career Works (VAWC), to document services provided to eligible veterans, eligible persons, and employers. Veterans register for employment in the VAWC, and if triaged for case management services by a DVOPs, when clients are job ready, DVOPs and LLVERs coordinate job matching with employers. Planned In-person and Virtual Job Fairs are conducted by LLVERs throughout the year with strong support from the State employer base, ONE-STOP partners, community partners, national recognized groups such as the National Chamber of Commerce Foundation, American Legion, and many others.

DVOP specialists and LLVERs are essential parts of and fully integrated into the workforce development network. They are included among the Virginia Workforce Connection (VAWC) system and the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner staff, which consists of all staff employed by programs or activities operated by WIOA partners listed in 29 U.S.C. § 2841(b) that provide online and/or in-person workforce development or related support services as part of the workforce development system. Other Virginia Job Center partner staff members include staff of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser (WP) and other VONE-STOP network partner programs.

LLVERs provide direct supervisory and administrative oversight for the DVOP staff in their assigned areas of operation. Lead LVERS perform their traditional role within their assigned geographic area 70% of the time. The remaining time is spent performing supervisory functions for DVOP staff, thus ensuring that each staff member is performing according to expectations and increasing the integration and accountability of JVSG staff as a partner within the current workforce model. Two DVOPs are currently assigned as Intensive Service Coordinators (ISCs) and are in the Prince William and Hampton offices. In addition, two DVOPS are assigned as DVOP/Veteran Employment Specialists (VES) and are located in the Prince William and Hampton offices. In this DVOP/VES role they perform their traditional DVOP role within their assigned geographic area 50% of the time. The remaining 50% is spent performing duties as a Wagner-Peyser Veteran Employment Specialist conducting outreach and employment services to Veterans, Military Spouses, and Dependent family members on local military installations that do not meet eligibility requirements to see a DVOP.

Furthermore, in addition to DVOP Specialists, each one-stop will have trained case managers and business services teams. DVOP specialists coordinate closely with these One Stop Center staff members when providing individualized career services to veterans with an SBE. LLVERs provide advice and guidance as needed to One Stop Center staff that are providing services to eligible veterans and other eligible persons and are mandatory members of local Business Services Team.

When not actively providing individualized career services or reviewing open case files, DVOP Specialists and other One Stop Center workforce representatives conduct outreach at off-site locations including, but not limited to, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offices, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) for the U.S. DVA, Military Treatment facilities (MTF), Warrior Transition Units/Battalion (WTU/WTB), Local Prisons and Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantee locations. The purpose of these outreach efforts is two-fold. The first purpose is to find veterans in need of services and invite them to the ONE-STOP and the appropriate services or referrals will be made. The second purpose is to develop relationships with supportive services in the area so that SBE and other veterans can be referred to those agencies for services.

The LLVER coordinates with Regional Industry Sector Coordinators, Business Services Coordinators, and members of the Workforce Delivery Teams to advocate to employers on behalf of veterans and to develop job opportunities specifically for veterans. LLVER staff train WP funded and other ONE-STOP staff on how to screen/triage and veterans to determine JVSP program eligibility and to refer eligible veterans and eligible persons for DVOP services, educate those staff about current employment initiatives and programs

for veterans, and train staff to ensure compliance with priority of service requirements.

DVOP specialists -- Under 38 U.S.C. § 4103A(a), a DVOP specialist provides Career and Individualized Career Services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor; and

LLVER – Under U.S.C 38, § 4104(b), the LLVERs principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training and placement services furnished to veterans in a state under the applicable state employment service delivery systems.

B. THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE; SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE;

IAW the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act amended U.S.C. Title 38, Sections 4103A and 4104, to state that DVOPs and LLVERs are prohibited from performing non-veteran related duties that detract from their ability to perform their statutorily-defined duties related to meeting the employment needs of eligible veterans and eligible spouses.

The specific duties of DVOP specialists and LLVER staff throughout the state are consistent with the roles and responsibilities outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A, 4104, and current guidance provided by DOL Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS).

LLVER

American Job Center (one-stop): LLVERs are required to provide training and instruction on the JVSG to partner staff members working in an ONE-STOP. Training may be completed with a group or on an individual basis. Overall expectations are that partners will be able to appropriately refer clients and businesses.

Employer Outreach: LLVER staff work with other service providers in an ONE-STOP to promote the advantages of hiring Veterans to employers and employer groups. LLVERs market job seeking Veterans as individuals who have highly marketable skills and experience. LLVER staff serve as an advocate for Veterans with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in a variety of outreach activities such as: Planning and participation in job and career fairs; coordination with unions, apprenticeship programs, and business organizations to promote employment and training programs for Veterans; informing Federal Contractors of their responsibility to recruit and retain qualified Veterans; and promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for Veterans. When employer outreach is primarily accomplished by a “Business Services

Team” or like entity, the LLVER must be included as an active member of that team. LLVER staff may also conduct other employer outreach activities that support job development and the referral of Veterans to appropriate job openings. When assigned responsibility for more than one local office or service delivery point, LLVER staff should conduct outreach and job development activities throughout their area of responsibility and partner with other LLVERs in bordering territories.

Business Services Teams: When employer outreach is primarily accomplished by a “Business Services Team” or like entity, the LLVER should be included as an active member of that team. While serving on a team, LLVER staff must ensure that their primary focus remains on advocating for Veterans. LLVER staff does not need to be a Subject Matter Expert (SME) on other partner programs, but should have a thorough understanding and contact information for each partner.

Job Fairs: LLVERs are encouraged whenever possible to partner with other agencies to plan and participate in the creation of job and career fairs. LLVERs may not act as a financial agent, solicit, and accept goods or services for the benefit of an event.

Individualized Job Development: The primary focus of the LLVER role and the majority of the effort of LLVER staff should be on individualized job development for Veterans, particularly those determined to be job ready after receipt of case management services from a DVOP specialist or Veterans working with WSRs or partner agencies. Job development by LLVER staff should include efforts to increase job opportunities for Veterans through direct employer contact. Individualized job development should center on each Veteran’s needs, skills, abilities, goals, and physical abilities and limitations. LLVER staff should conduct outreach to employers, seminars for employers and in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups. They also facilitate employment, training, and placement services. LLVERs can work with DVOPS and other partner staff to match specific veterans with specific employers. These actions of the LLVER will improve the potential for positive job development referrals. Additionally, Wagner-Peyser Staff or DVOPs for case managed veterans should provide services such as the following to improve the potential for positive job development referrals: Job search assistance workshops, individualized vocational guidance and labor market information; and targeted referral to training and supportive services.

DVOP

A DVOP services an eligible veteran or the spouse of an eligible veteran who is self-identified as having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE). Case management continues to be an appropriate service delivery strategy or framework within which individualized career services may be delivered, particularly for veterans. Individualized career services should be delivered following the case management framework in most cases. However, case management itself is a process, not a service, and is therefore not to be reported as a service, intensive or otherwise.

DVOPs provide individualized career services within the case management framework can include, but is not limited to:

1. Verifying profile and background information in Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC)
2. Completing an objective assessment
3. Developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and managing the goals and objectives
4. Providing consistent contact
5. Referrals to outside agencies for services, training and/or employment
6. Follow ups and closure

When conducting an objective assessment for veterans, DVOPs must ask questions that will identify barriers to employment, as well as to assess the veteran's current household situation to consider other extenuating factors that could prohibit a successful outcome. The findings from the objective assessment summary in VaWC under the case management plan will drive the creation of the IEP and will help the veteran and DVOP mutually identify goals and any potential barriers to gaining meaningful employment.

The DVOP will assist the veteran or other eligible individuals, prioritize their needs and make the necessary referrals to meet those needs. The DVOP should maintain positive contact with the veteran or other eligible person to ensure positive outcomes.

The objective assessment must be annotated in a case note and must identify strengths, barriers to employment*, current resources, needed resources*, skills, needed skills, and/or job ready status. *Confidential and sensitive details will be left out of the VaWC case note and other sections of the Objective Assessment and IEP (e.g., medical information protected under HIPAA. Instead, the employment limitation will be annotated, not the specific medical condition).

Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

GOALS: IEP Goals must be descriptive, meaningful, and should fall into one of the following groups: employment, education or training. The goal details section of the IEP should include an explanation of goal description if summarized.

The goal details should also include a step-by-step list of all objectives that may need to be met. Goal dates should be realistic and should be changed accordingly if the goal date has passed. If the objective is completed during the initial visit, it can be annotated here instead of creating an Objective in the system. All steps must be listed, but only those steps that will be completed within the next 30 days need to be built into the system. Over the course of case management, all steps should eventually be built into system unless the Veteran achieves a successful outcome prior to completion.

OBJECTIVES: IEP Objectives must be descriptive, meaningful, and should either be a step in the process to reach the desired goal or help to either overcome or circumvent an identified barrier.

Consistent Contact During Case Management and Follow Up After Job Placement:

Required timelines for making consistent contact during the Case Management Framework varies slightly between Chapter 31 veterans and traditional JVSG clients. During Chapter 31 Case Management, clients will be contacted minimally every 14 days. For Case Management of clients that are not Chapter 31, it is a best practice to contact clients minimally every 14 days but not to exceed more than 30 days.

After job placement, the follow up requirement with the clients is 30 and 60 days from the job start date, regardless if the clients are Chapter 31 or otherwise case managed by JVSG.

DVOPs are required to review open IEPs as the objective review dates or goal completion dates pass. After reviewing objective and/or goal notes, the DVOP will follow up with the Veteran to determine if the objective and/or goal has been completed or obtained. Follow-up attempts will include a phone call, text, and either an email or VaWC message as necessary. If the objective/goal has been completed, the completion date will be updated in VaWC with a comment in the notes section.

C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER;

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to ensuring program integration and coordination of employment and training services through the Virginia ONE-STOP system. This one-stop system is the primary source of information and service for Virginia's job seeking veterans. Virginia team members, which includes DVOP specialists, work together to obtain employment, training and related services for veterans through the WIOA partner programs, including Vocational Rehabilitation, which is a fully- integrated ONE-STOP partner. DVOP specialists are stationed in all Comprehensive One-stops and most affiliate locations.

Collaboration is also enforced via program updates and other workforce system policies shared among partners at regularly scheduled staff meetings and training. During those meetings, all staff members share information about new employers and job orders received, One Stop Center scheduled activities, and positive recruitment activities taking place in the region.

Although DVOP Specialists are responsible for case management and facilitating individualized career services for veterans with significant barriers, they are not alone in this effort. Providing services to veterans with SBEs takes a team effort and as such, all services available in any One- Stop are available to veterans on a priority of service basis. Non-JVSG funded staff provide individualized career services and case management as appropriate to veterans and other eligible persons when no DVOP Specialist is available.

The LLVER serves as a member of the Business Services Team in their respective WDB.

The team's primary focus is to conduct job development and outreach to employers. LVER Staff responsibilities include operating targeted hiring events and veteran's job fairs. LVER Staff provides program continuity by acting as the technical program advisor and trainer for One Stop Center staff.

Virginia has adopted a demand-driven approach to all workforce and employment programs to focus services and training toward high demand jobs. The State promotes employment and job training opportunities through the use of several specialized programs. The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) operates various veterans' programs throughout the state to promote education and other customized training for veterans to succeed in the civilian workplace. These programs are designed to help the veteran earn a degree or certification. These opportunities are presented to veterans through office visits and presentations at Veterans Workshops.

The local One Stop Centers act as the central hub for all workforce activities and associated training within the state. The State's strategy for the leveraging of other state and federal education and training programs to develop skills necessary to prepare veterans for in-demand jobs is therefore focused on, and operated in, close cooperation with our One Stop Center partners. The combined efforts of the effective integration of the JVSG into the One Stop Center service delivery model, outreach to and relationship building with relevant partners, and comprehensive up-to-date information on in-demand jobs and skills, produces a coordination of programs and services that reduces or eliminates duplication, closes gaps in service, and identifies the program or service best suited to the individual veteran being served. In this way, the State leverages a wide range of state and federal training programs to efficiently and effectively provide veterans with the specific skills necessary to secure and succeed in current in-demand jobs.

The State's outreach efforts and public information activities are used to inform veterans of the services available at their local One Stop Centers and the training opportunities that are available in their area and within the state. These outreach efforts, as described in Section B above, are focused on key service providers likely to interact with SBE veterans. The intent of this outreach is to educate service providers about job training and other services available to veterans at their local One Stop Center. In turn, the State's partner service providers can encourage veterans to seek services at local Career Work Center offices. Due to the complexity of eligibility criteria and the variance of programs offered in disparate areas, public information systems usually do not provide specifics on particular programs but do direct veterans and other eligible persons into the local One Stop Center.

The DVOP specialists will work with the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) contact to assist in the assessment of the job readiness status of the Chapter 31 Veteran or assist with a Labor Market Information (LMI) referral from VR&E.

- In the case of a LMI referral, VR&E forwards the LMI referral to the Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) for completion and return to VR&E
 - ISC refers LMI requests to the LLVERs who take a look at DVOP caseloads and assigns the LMI referral to a local DVOP

- The DVOP will complete all fields on the LMI report within 30 calendar days and will distribute the LMI report to VR&E participant, the referring Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC)/Employment Coordinator (EC), and the ISC
- If the client is job ready, the DVOP works with VR&E to develop rehabilitation plan for employment services only.
 - VR&E forwards job ready client information to the Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC).
 - ISC refers Chapter 31 clients to the LLVERs who take a look at DVOP caseloads and assigns client to DVOP in the office closest to the client.
 - Within 10 calendar days of receipt, the assigned DVOP will provide the referring Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor/Employment Coordinator (VRC/EC) an email response confirming receipt of the LMI/ES referral and make a minimum of three documented attempts to contact VR&E participants.
 - The DVOP will provide job search assistance (individualized career services, resume assistance, Labor Market Information [LMI], job referrals, employer contacts) within the case management framework until VR&E participants are discontinued, interrupted, or provided a 30- and 60-calendar day intervals of follow up by VR&E and the State Agency Virginia Works after obtaining suitable employment and considered rehabilitated. Regardless of when an employment services referral is received, the DVOP will provide a summary of VR&E participants' job search efforts as well as the DVOP's job search assistance to the referring EC/VRC and the ISC by the 10th calendar day of the month on the approved standardized monthly progress report.
 - If the client is not job ready, the DVOP provides the individualized career services necessary for the veteran to become job ready. These may include LMI and employment information on potential career paths. If not job ready, works with VA to enroll veteran in VA funded training and refers client back to VR&E.

D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;

The State shall request one (1) percent of its annual allocation for each year's JVSG grant as a Performance Incentive award for eligible staff. This award shall be used in accordance with VPL 01-24, Attachment 5 and VPL 07-19, or the most recent guidance from USDOL-VETS. The objective of the JVSG incentive award program is to recognize, promote, and reward superlative and exceptional performance in the provision of service to veterans within the context of statutes and regulations. The basic objective of the awards program is to create an awareness and continuous level of interest in the importance of priority of service for veterans and an environment that engenders

continuous improvement in serving veterans across the spectrum of service. The award system shall continue to operate as defined in the applicable State Policy and as approved by USDOL.

The State anticipates that individuals and teams will recognize the value and process of the awards program and will, as a result, develop a competitive attitude within the agency that supports esprit de corps within the team while sharpening the focus on service to other eligible persons.

Incentive awards shall be expended up to and including one (1) percent of the total grant amount for the fiscal year, which is set aside strictly for this purpose in the annual grant budget. Awards shall be determined based on a percentage of total award available for that fiscal year but shall not (in total) exceed one (1) percent of the total available funds for a given fiscal year or the most current USDOL guidance on grant funded incentive award amounts.

Exceptional merit is based on a number of factors, with the overriding concept being the value of the process. In essence this is determining both a quantitative and qualitative rating and merit based on the following factors:

- Total numbers of veterans served and total services rendered to those veterans within the parameters of these areas;
- Outreach to veterans and subsequent flow of core services that result in veterans becoming job ready, or the need for intensive services;
- Outreach to and the comprehensive assessment of special target groups within the veteran community;
- Individualized career services, case management, and outcomes of those efforts;
- Job placements, in particular job developments, for veterans and veterans with disabilities;
- Other successful outcomes for veterans who may not return to employment, but through community partner referral developed an improved situation and/or economic stability;
- Outreach to and partner development with employers and federal contractors in the support of creating job opportunities for veterans;
- Outreach to and partner development with community service agencies, other state and federal programs, and internal agency components in creating a supportive service network for veterans with barriers to employment and who may need case management.
- Organizations, participation, and success in job fairs and other veteran center community activities;
- Any other innovative veteran related activity.

By state law, all awards must be cash, and all cash awards must be presented directly to

individuals. This means that offices (teams) receiving incentive recognition shall share equally in the overall office award, and the individual award amount shall be determined by the team composition.

For state merit staff awardees, the incentive will be paid out through the payroll system. For non-state merit employee, a separate payroll check will be issued to the individual.

Not later than 25 August of each year, supervisors will submit recommendations of names and amount not to exceed \$1,500 per individual and/or per incident of achievement to the Chief, Veteran Services and Director of Workforce Operations. There will be four levels of awards designated: Platinum (\$1,500), Gold (\$1,000), Silver (\$750), Bronze (\$500). If there are any remaining incentive award funds less than \$500, one special award will be made to use the full incentive award amount. This submission will also include a narrative report that identifies the number and type of activities extended to veterans and their outcome in no more than one page, not including additional documentation in the form of VWC or other data can be attached. The criteria for the award type will include, but is not limited to, the U.S. Department of Labor performance measures for LVERs and DVOPs and performance measures established by Virginia Works and partner agencies.

For planning purposes Virginia intends to award approximately 12 Platinum, 15 Gold, 20 Silver and 20 Bronze incentive awards annually. However, the number of actual awards will be dependent on actual recommendation submissions and the annual grant funding amount. The Chief of Veteran Services and Director of Workforce Operations will comprise a selection board that includes the three LVER Regional Managers and one District Manager to select submissions and ensure execution of these awards no later than 30 September of each year.

Determination of the award shall be by a combination of objective and subjective data. Data compilation, analysis, and award determination shall be by a team proposed by the Chief, Veterans Services. The final award approval shall be by the Appointing Authority, Director of Virginia Works who is also the signatory authority for the JVSG grant relationship with USDOL.

Incentive award funds distributed shall be obligated by September 30, each fiscal year and distributed not later than December 31, of the same year in accordance with the regulation.

An Incentive Awards report will be submitted in accordance with the most recent Incentive Award VPL not later than November 14 of each FY. This report will detail all incentive awards made to individuals. This report will include as a minimum the following:

1. Award recipient by name and title
2. A description of the value of each award

E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE

STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM
PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL
COUNTIES OR PARISHES);

Please refer to the following Veterans Program Letters (VPL) to identify the eligible Veterans, eligible spouses, and Special populations to be served by this grant:

VPL 03-14 Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Program Reforms and Roles Responsibilities of American Job (ONE-STOP) Staff Serving

www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/legacy/files/VPL-03-14.pdf

VPL 03-14, Change 1 Expansion and Clarification of Definition of Significant Barriers to Employment for Determining Eligibility for the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)

www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/legacy/files/VPL-03-14-Change-1.pdf

VPL 03-14, Change 2 Expansion and Clarification of Homeless Definition as a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) (or the most current VPL)

www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/legacy/files/VPL-03-14-Change-2.pdf

VPL 03-19 Designation of Additional Populations Eligible for Services from Disabled Veteran's

www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/legacy/files/veterans-program-letter-03-19.pdf

Outreach Program Specialist or the most current VPL)

IAW U.S.C. 38, 4103A(a), DVOP specialists must provide individualized career services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses to meet their employment needs, prioritizing services to special disabled and other disabled veterans, as defined by U.S.C. 38, 4211, and to other eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the U.S. Secretary of Labor. The statute also requires that DVOP specialists place maximum emphasis on assisting veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. To ensure that DVOP specialists are able to fulfill their statutory responsibilities to provide individualized career services to these categories of veterans, DOL has developed the following guidance to identify the veterans prioritized and emphasized by the DVOP statute.

DVOPs will limit their activities to providing services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who:

- Meet the definition of an individual with a SBE specifically defined in bold below.
- Are members of a veteran population identified by the U.S. Secretary of Labor under U.S.C 38, 4103A(a)(1)(c) as eligible for DVOP services

Special Disabled or Disabled Veterans as those terms are defined in U.S.C. 38, 4211(1) and (3):

- Prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the U.S. Secretary of Labor.
- DVOP specialist performs outreach to the VA VR&E office.
- The DVOP specialists will work with the VR&E contact to assist in the assessment of the job readiness status of the Chapter 31 Veteran.

Homeless veterans as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act 42 U.S.C. 1130(a) and (b):

- Partnerships have been established in Richmond with River City Comprehensive Counseling (Homeless Veteran Re-integration Program) and Focused Outreach Richmond (Incarcerated Veteran Transition Program), in Hampton with STOP Inc Hampton Roads and in Roanoke with Total Action Against Poverty.
- Clean and sober veterans will be referred to the above three employment partners.
- Referrals are made to housing through VA programs and the HUD vouchers program that provides permanent housing.
- DVOP specialists are assigned to provide outreach and ensure Dual Enrollment for all Veterans referred to the Homeless Veteran Re-integration Programs located in Hampton, Richmond and Roanoke.

Recently separated service member as defined in U.S.C 38 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months

Veteran who is/was an Offender as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration:

- Partnership has been established in Richmond with Focused Outreach Richmond (Incarcerated Veteran Transition Program). Justice involved Veterans being released in the Richmond commuting area will be referred to this partner.
- DVOP specialists provide services to Veterans in Veterans Court, in Roanoke, Wise, and Fairfax Virginia.
- DVOP specialists provide services in Virginia Department of Correction Facilities.

Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate

Low-income Veterans, as defined by WIOA Section 3(36).

Veteran populations identified by the U. S. Secretary of Labor:

DVOP Specialists also provide services to Special populations identified by the Secretary under 38 U.S.C. § 4103A (a)(1)(C). Please refer to the following Veterans Program Letters (VPL) to identify the eligible Veterans and Special populations to be served by this grant: VPL 03-19 Designation of Additional Populations Eligible for Services from Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist or the most current VPL).

These populations are:

Veterans aged 18 to 24.

- Veterans aged 18-24 possess limited civilian work history which can make transitioning to the civilian labor force difficult. Based on this fact, veterans between the ages of 18 and 24 may benefit from individualized career services provided by a DVOP Specialist.

Vietnam Era Veterans.

- Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4211, the term "Veteran of the Vietnam Era" is an eligible veteran any part of whose active military, naval, or air service was during the Vietnam Era (Beginning on February 28, 1961 and ending on May 7, 1975 in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period, and the period beginning on August 5, 1964 and ending on May 7, 1975 in all other cases). The Bureau of Labor Statistics and Department of Veterans Affairs data indicate that there are still a sizable number of Vietnam-era Veterans in the workforce, and many face difficulty in finding and maintaining employment.
- Processes have been implemented to ensure services are rendered IAW applicable VPLs. Services are being provided to this segment of veterans.
- DVOP specialists provide outreach at Vietnam era service organizations, providing information on the services offered.

Eligible Transitioning Service Members, Spouses, and Caregivers

- Transitioning members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of individualized career services
- Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities (MTF) or Warrior Transition Units (WTU)
- The spouses or other family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured members
- The populations of eligible veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the state workforce agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);

F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

The description of how the state implements and monitors priority of service to covered persons is included in the Common Elements of the WIOA State Plan.

G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF:

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

I. SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

Informed by state demographics, current economic conditions, labor market information, and historical performance data, Virginia determines and sets evidence-based performance targets for the following three employment-related primary indicators of performance. Our performance goals for participants who have been served by a DVOP are:

1. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit: 59%
2. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit: 55%
3. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit: \$6,700

Unemployment Insurance

(OMB Control Number: 1205-0132)

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program requires a State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) on a 2-year planning cycle that is a condition of receipt of administrative funding to administer the program. The SQSP is the State's UI performance management and planning process that allows for an exchange of information between Federal and State partners to enhance the UI program's ability to reflect their joint commitment to performance excellence and client-centered services. A formal two-year SQSP is submitted biennially. On the off years, States may be required to modify the SQSP with additional corrective action plans and narrative if they are failing any new performance measures, and they are required to provide updated budget documents, certifications, and assurances. ETA Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition provides detailed guidance for the preparation and submittal of the SQSP and supplemental guidance is provided in an annual UIPL, issued as UIPL 15-19 for the FY 2020 SQSP. The Social Security Act (SSA) sections 302 and 303 authorize the Secretary of Labor to provide funds to administer the UI program and govern the expenditure of those funds. States that choose the option to include UI in a WIOA Combined State Plan will be required to submit their SQSP through the Combined

State Plan process. The SQSP must be prepared in accordance to the instructions in ET Handbook 336, 18th Edition and there are no changes to the established SQSP cycle if a State chose to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process.

A. CONTENTS OF A COMPLETE UI SQSP PACKAGE

A complete UI SQSP package includes the following documents, as described in Chapter 1, ETA Handbook 336, 18th Edition:

1. TRANSMITTAL LETTER

A cover letter to the appropriate Regional Office (RO) transmitting all the required SQSP documents.

DRAFT



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Virginia Employment Commission

Demetrios J. Melis
Commissioner

Post Office Box 26441
Richmond, VA 23261-6441

October 27, 2023

Ms. Karen Pasquale, Chief
Division of Workforce Security
U. S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
170 South Independence Mall, West
Suite 825 East
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-3315

Dear Ms. Pasquale:

Enclosed is the Virginia Employment Commission's State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Unemployment Insurance Operations. This plan is prepared in accordance with ET Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition, Change 4, Unemployment Insurance SQSP Planning and Reporting Guidelines, and Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 09-23 for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan.

Please contact Susan Landis, Unemployment Insurance Director, by telephone at (804) 786-0873, or by email at Susan.Landis@vec.virginia.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,



Demetrios Melis

c. Susan Landis

Enclosures

(866) 832-2363
E-Mail: CustomerService@vec.virginia.gov

VRC/TDD VA Relay 711
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA Virginia Employment Commission

October 27, 2023

Demetrios J. Melis, Commissioner

Post Office Box 26441, Richmond, VA 23261-6441

Ms. Karen Pasquale, Chief
Division of Workforce Security
U. S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
170 South Independence Mall, West
Suite 825 East
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-3315

Dear Ms. Pasquale:

Enclosed is the Virginia Employment Commission's State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Unemployment Insurance Operations. This plan is prepared in accordance with ET Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition, Change 4, Unemployment Insurance SQSP Planning and Reporting Guidelines, and Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 09-23 for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan.

Please contact Susan Landis, Unemployment Insurance Director, by telephone at (804) 786-0873, or by email at Susan.Landis@vec.virginia.gov with any questions.

Sincerely, Demetrios Melis

2. BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS

Budget worksheets/forms and plan for program administration based on projected allocations received from the Federal partner. These forms include Worksheet UI-1 and SF 424, SF 424A and SF 424B. The SF 424A is only required if the State vary the quarterly distribution of base claims activity staff years.

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424		
* 1. Type of Submission: ☐ Preapplication ☒ Application ☐ Changed/Corrected Application		
* 2. Type of Application: ☒ New ☐ Continuation ☐ Revision		
* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s): * Other (Specify): 		
* 3. Date Received: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission.		4. Applicant Identifier:
5a. Federal Entity Identifier: 		5b. Federal Award Identifier:
State Use Only:		
6. Date Received by State: 09/13/2023		7. State Application Identifier:
8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:		
* a. Legal Name: Virginia Employment Commission		
* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): 54-6001795		* c. UEI: CTRNP6KH7FN7
d. Address:		
* Street1: 6606 W. Broad St.		
Street2: P.O. Box 26441		
* City: Richmond		
County/Parish:		
* State: VA: Virginia		
Province:		
* Country: USA: UNITED STATES		
* Zip / Postal Code: 23261-6441		
e. Organizational Unit:		
Department Name: Unemployment Insurance		Division Name: Unemployment Insurance
f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:		
Prefix: Ms.		* First Name: Susan
Middle Name:		
* Last Name: Landis		
Suffix:		
Title: Unemployment Insurance Director		
Organizational Affiliation: 		
* Telephone Number: 804-786-0873		Fax Number:
* Email: Susan.Landis@vec.virginia.gov		

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

A: State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

Employment and Training Administration

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

17.225

CFDA Title:

Unemployment Insurance

* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

ETA-UIPL-13-23-BASE

* Title:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines

13. Competition Identification Number:

ETA-UIPL-13-23-BASE

Title:

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

VA-003 VEC Unemployment Insurance 2024

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424	
16. Congressional Districts Of:	
* a. Applicant: VA-003	* b. Program/Project: VA-ALL
Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.	
	Add Attachment Delete Attachment View Attachment
17. Proposed Project:	
* a. Start Date: 10/01/2023	* b. End Date: 12/31/2024
18. Estimated Funding (\$):	
* a. Federal	41,868,159.00
* b. Applicant	0.00
* c. State	0.00
* d. Local	0.00
* e. Other	0.00
* f. Program Income	0.00
* g. TOTAL	41,868,159.00
* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?	
☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .	
☒ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.	
☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.	
* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)	
☐ Yes ☒ No	
If "Yes", provide explanation and attach	
	Add Attachment Delete Attachment View Attachment
21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)	
☒ ** I AGREE	
** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.	
Authorized Representative:	
Prefix: Ms.	* First Name: Carrie
Middle Name:	
* Last Name: Roth	
Suffix:	
* Title: Commissioner	
* Telephone Number: 804-786-3001	Fax Number: 804-225-3923
* Email: Carrie.Roth@vec.virginia.gov	
* Signature of Authorized Representative: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission.	* Date Signed: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission.

View Burden Statement OMB Number 4040-0004 Expiration 11/30/2025

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

1. Type of Submission: Application

2. Type of Application: New

3. Date Received: Completed by Grants.gov upon submission 9/19/2023

4. Application Identifier:

5a. Federal Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Number:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State: 09/13/2023

7. State Application Number:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

a. Legal Name: Virginia Employment Commission

b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): 54-6001795

c. UEI: CTRNP6KH7FN7

d. Address:

Street1: 6606 W Broad Street

Street2:

City: Richmond

County/Parish:

State: VA: Virginia

Province:

Country: USA: United States

Zip/Postal Code: 23261-6441

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name: Unemployment Insurance

Division Name: Unemployment Insurance

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix: Ms.

First Name: Susan

Middle Name:

Last Name: Landis

Suffix:

Title: Unemployment Insurance Director

Organizational Affiliation:

Telephone Number: (804) 786-0873

Fax Number:

Email: Susan.Lanids@vec.virginia.gov

9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type: A: State Government

10. Name of Federal Agency: Employment and Training Administration

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 17-225

CFDA Title: Unemployment Insurance Operations

12. Funding Opportunity Number: UIPL 13-23-BASE

Title: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets

13. Competition Identification Number: ETA-UIPL-13-23-BASE

Title: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance (UI) Resource Planning Targets and Guidelines

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project: VA-003 VEC Unemployment Insurance 2024

16. Congressional Districts of:

a. Applicant: VA-003

b. Program/Project: VA-ALL

17. Proposed Project:

a. Start Date: 10/01/2023

b. End Date: 12/31/2024

18. Estimated Funding (\$): a. Federal: \$41,868,159

b. Applicant:

c. State:

d. Local:

e. Other:

f. Program Income:

g. TOTAL: \$41,868,159

19. Is Application Subject to Review by State under Executive Order 12372 Process? b.
Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.

20. Is the Applicant Delinquent on Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in
attachment.) No

21. By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of
certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the
best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with
any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent
statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S.
Code, Title 218, Section 1001) I AGREE **The list of certifications and assurances, or an
internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency
specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: Ms.

First Name: Carrie

Middle Name:

Last Name: Roth

Suffix:

Title: Commissioner

Telephone Number: 804-786-3001

Fax Number: 804-225-3923

Email: Carrie.Roth@vec.virginia.gov

Signature of Authorized Representative: Carrie Roth

3. THE STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

(Virginia – Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024)

A. Overview

1. State priorities and the strategic direction the state has adopted to ensure continuous improvement.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has set its priorities and developed its strategic direction to transform the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to become the “Best in Class” example of an employment security agency in the country that is resilient to changes in the economy.

The VEC is committed to superior performance at every level of its operation. Superior performance means delivering accurate, timely and efficient services that put the customer first, prioritize innovation, foster continuous improvement, and employs exemplary stewardship of public resources.

The VEC is committed to continually communicating and implementing state and federal policies and procedures to safeguard sensitive information--protecting it against unauthorized use, inspection, or disclosure.

To achieve our objectives, we have implemented strategies that have substantially reduced backlogs of work and helped us to prevent future backlogs:

- **The agency will further develop and execute plans to eliminate all remaining pandemic-related unemployment insurance work streams. These include claims processing, adjudication, fraud investigations, and appeals.**

Objective Strategies

- The agency will conduct regular operations meetings to provide insights and actionable measures to reduce the backlog.
- The agency will conduct continual as well as just-in-time training for staff to leverage their ability to more efficiently and accurately complete work. We recently held two mandatory agency-wide training events toward this effort: one to review customer services skills and one that allowed all staff to participate in training modules of their choice using USDOL and NASWA resources. Training initiatives are ongoing.
- The agency will implement various technology enhancements to improve the function and capabilities of the unemployment insurance system.

-
- **The agency will develop and execute a plan that will result in Virginia being ranked as a top performer among other states for Unemployment Insurance, Workforce, and Bureau of Labor Statistics programs.**

Objective Strategies

- An agency assessment was conducted to determine capacity and identify key strategies to produce best-in-class performance results.
- Complete recommendations from 2021 Joint Legislative & Audit Review Commission (JLARC) report on the Virginia Employment Commission and monitor to ensure compliance on an ongoing basis.
- Develop reporting tools through Power BI to give managers and leaders insights into performance.
- Recruit, retain, and assign qualified staff to deliver quality customer services based on defined performance standards.
- **We strive to become resilient and responsive to the economy and the needs of workers in Virginia**

Objective Strategies

- Develop a Resiliency Plan that enables the agency to respond to economic events that require increased capacity and capability to support Virginians in their time of need.
- Build an Information Technology system that is flexible and responsive to the demands of the agency and its customers.
- Meet or exceed United States Department of Labor performance measure targets for agency programs.

In addition to the resiliency plan, the agency, through two projects under the Equity and Access Grant (UIPL 23-21), is focusing on a plain language/communication project along with the creation of an office of ombudsman. The two components of the grant are:

Effective Customer Communication

The Communications proposal will promote equitable access to UC programs by expanding current communication beyond English and Spanish (to include 9 new languages by the end of the project's timeline) through the Interactive Voice Response system (IVR) and other modes of communication (website and print). The agency will improve the quality of its forms, written decisions and instructions that are being sent to the claimants (using both a readability assessment and plain language tool) so that they are better understood by the general public. Using workgroups, focus groups, and survey results throughout the project, the VEC will develop instructional videos to help claimants better understand the UI application process and an online eligibility tool that helps claimants better understand their potential eligibility and benefits. This is all to ensure equitable accessibility to

underserved individuals in rural and depressed areas, individuals with disabilities and LEP individuals. There is a dedicated data scientist who will focus on UI data for the development of any new outcome metrics to support improving and promoting access for those underserved.

Ten additional languages have been added to the Interactive Voice Response system when customers call-in to the customer contact center. The translations help direct English Second Language (ESL) claimants through the claim filing process. The claimant handbook has been updated based on the NASWA model handbook and has been translated into Spanish, with additional translations in additional languages coming online throughout the year. The handbook as well as other language service information will be housed on an agency webpage dedicated to language and access services. The agency is in the hiring process for a vendor that will begin to program the document changes into the Virginia Unemployment Insurance System. The goal is for nearly 200 documents to be updated based on DOL's plain language guidance that will include a new standard font, header and clearer directions for claimants on how to respond to the agency.

Customer Outreach and Issue Mitigation (Ombudsman)

The Customer Outreach and Issue Mitigation (Ombudsman) proposal will promote equal access for all to UC programs by creating a position of Ombudsman within the Office of Customer Advocacy (previously referred to as the Customer Service Unit). This position which we are calling Chief Customer Advocate was filled earlier this year. It will allow better opportunities for improvement of issues for those claimants with disabilities, LEP, disadvantaged and underserved communities or those who have other service issues. The Chief Customer Advocate will create a Customer Advisory Council for the purpose of offering guidance and feedback on the effectiveness of outreach efforts as well as areas that can be improved. In addition, the VEC will have a team of customer service representatives (to support the ombudsman) based in our Vansant call center and a customer advocate assigned to a workforce center in each of the 14 local workforce development areas in Virginia. These advocates will work closely with local advocacy organizations familiar with those underserved in their communities. Throughout the project, educational materials will be developed and distributed. Additionally, surveys will be distributed for feedback and to support outcome metrics. There is a dedicated data scientist focused on UI data in these areas to develop any new outcome metrics to support improving and promoting access to all communities throughout the Commonwealth. The Office of Customer Advocacy, the Chief Customer Advocate and 14 advocates will be sustained within the agency after the grant project has been completed and funds obligated.

The Chief Customer Advocate has created the Customer Advisory Council, which has met three times in the past year. The council is made-up of partnering agencies and their respective staff. For the regional advocates, currently there are 10 positions across the state. The regional advocates have also held introducing themselves and their roles within

their local communities. The regional advocate staff are assisting customers with barriers and assisting referrals from partners and local legislative offices.

2. Assessment of past performance and expected future performance. Includes, at state discretion, a discussion of external factors that may have performance implications.

The Commonwealth of Virginia and specifically the Virginia Employment Commission has realized significant decreases in the acceptable levels of performance (ALP) pertaining to the various program areas that are measured. The deficiencies that exist are a direct result of the workload brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the VEC was meeting or exceeding performance expectations in most program areas. In responding to the work brought on by the pandemic the agency faced many challenges. We had issues with technology as well as human resources. We know that our experience is not unique as our interaction with other workforce entities have revealed this shared experience. We now find ourselves in a place where we have already or are eliminating backlogs in various workstreams. This has been a huge undertaking and essential to having our agency poised to make gains in our ALPs. In fact, the quarter that ended June 30, 2022, reveals an upward trend in the program areas. Our corrective action plans accompanied with milestones for each will provide the roadmap to acceptable levels of program performance.

3. Coordination with other plans, including WIOA. The SQSP is outlined yearly in Virginia's Combined State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has elected to submit a combined state plan that displays coordination within WIOA and the SQSP. Additionally, the RESEA program is viewed as a crucial component of the workforce system here in the Commonwealth. Virginia views the RESEA program as a lynchpin between UI and WIOA. The agency has recently hired our new RESEA coordinator. He, in conjunction with partner agencies, will be working to return individuals to the workforce. The RESEA program will be emphasized as the vehicle to achieve this goal. This collaborative effort would build off the "My Reemployment Plan" tools. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program identifies claimants exiting the military (UCX claimants) and claimants determined by the WPRS model as "most likely to exhaust." This early intervention strategy identifies eligible claimants within the first five weeks of their claim and schedules them for an initial RESEA session by the seventh week of their claim.

RESEA participants must report to the workforce center in person where they receive a review of their UI rights and responsibilities, an orientation to the workforce system and services available and labor market information relevant to their career choices, assistance completing their job service registration and locating suitable jobs through the Virginia Workforce Connection job matching (labor exchange) system, a UI Eligibility Assessment

and review of work search activities. This in person, in depth work with our claimants ensures there is a complete understanding of the work search requirements of the UI program and enhances compliance with those requirements. The true value of the RESEA program is achieved when individuals return to the workforce quickly with employment that is consistent with their interest as well as their knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve long term success.

Potential eligibility, over payment or fraud issues are reported immediately by RESEA staff to the proper UI benefit unit so an eligibility determination can be made in a timely manner. This program is an important piece of the agency's overall integrity efforts to reduce and ultimately prevent the improper payment of unemployment insurance benefits.

Additional reemployment services, such as resume development and job search skills development (interviewing, networking, etc.) will be available based on each claimant's needs, along with referrals to training and supportive services as detailed in each claimant's reemployment plan. Recognizing the value in the RESEA program, the agency is eager to expand the universe of participants beyond those identified through the WPRS. The VEC looks forward to working with the USDOL to implement strategies that would engage non WPRS claimants in the program to maximize the reach of the RESEA program. Efforts such as these would only serve to increase UI program integrity and further avert improper payment of benefits.

B. Federal emphasis (GPRA goals), if required

There are three UI performance measures identified under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. The three key areas are identified below along with the goals associated with them, followed by Virginia's performance in each.

- Percent of intrastate payments made timely: Goal = 87%, Virginia = 57.49%
- Detection of recoverable overpayments: Goal = 57.5%, Virginia = 56.52%
- Percent of employer tax liability determination made timely: Goal = 90%, Virginia = 88.29%

Virginia is committed to meeting the GPRA goals for these important UI measures. We are encouraged that our performance in two of the three areas of federal emphasis is very close to meeting the targeted goal. The SQSP workbook contains a corrective action plan that identifies steps and milestones in our efforts to meet performance expectations in the percent of intrastate payments made timely as well as the detection of recoverable overpayments.

The performance goal of determining employer tax liability timely in 90% of cases is close to being obtained. This area is not part of the SQSP workbook but we would like to share our plan to meet and exceed this performance threshold. The agency receives information when a business establishes an IRS account and is assigned a federal identification number. In many cases, new employers do not meet the employment threshold that would make

them liable for UI taxes. Our plans include retaining these files and having our staff follow up with these employers to educate them of their tax liability. While we make these efforts initially, this responsibility may be overlooked by the employing entity. More frequent communication from our agency will help to establish those determinations more timely. We are also promoting the use of our Employer Self Service (ESS) online portal and State Information Data Exchange Services (SIDES) to promote more timely and accurate communication with our employer community.

Virginia wants to Improve work search verification through continued work of its RESEA program. Virginia views the RESEA program as a lynchpin between UI and WIOA. The RESEA program will be emphasized as the vehicle to achieve this goal. This collaborative effort will build off the “My Reemployment Plan” tools found in the Virginia Workforce Connection. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program identifies claimants exiting the military (UCX claimants) and claimants determined by the WPRS model as “most likely to exhaust.” This early intervention strategy identifies eligible claimants within the first five weeks of their claim and schedules them for an initial RESEA session by the seventh week of their claim. The agency has 45 RESEA representatives located in workforce centers across the state.

For worker misclassification, VEC Tax will use 1099 data received from the IRS to investigate working industries with common practices of worker misclassification. Worker misclassification is regularly investigated through audit procedures and employer education. From July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023, VEC tax representatives found 1,637 misclassified workers through audit procedures.

C. Program Review Deficiencies

The agency is engaged in the review of work within Benefit Payment Control, Internal Security, Benefit Accuracy Measure, and the Tax Performance System.

Some of the program reviews were suspended during the peak of the pandemic. However, the agency is now conducting those reviews as required.

D. Program Deficiencies

The workbook contains the agency’s corrective action plans to improve our performance. The agency leadership is committed to eliminating backlogs of work carried over from the pandemic. Everyday there are operation meetings that bring the responsible program area managers together with state and agency leadership to discuss issues, solicit ideas, provide feedback, and ultimately report on the progress being made in the key areas of claim taking, adjudication, fraud analysis, overpayments and appeals.

The timely payment of benefits is a primary focus of the agency. We have hired staff in all areas of the agency to include the Customer Contact Center, Benefit Payment Control, Benefit Payment Charge, Adjudication and Workforce Services. All these areas perform work that impacts the timely payment of benefits. With the increase of new staff, we recognize the importance of providing quality training and feedback to staff on the role they play and the effect they have on program performance. We have a UI training manager and staff that have begun providing training geared towards both new and tenured staff so that they understand the importance of timely payment of benefits and provide them with the skills to know what to look for and what actions to take to move a claim forward as appropriate. These training efforts are in unison with other training initiatives being conducted by supervisors within their respective units. Our goal is to have all vested employees trained by June of 2023. The management team will be monitoring performance in this key area and directing retraining as needed.

We feel that proper communication to the public is crucial in the proper administration of the UI program. An individual must clearly understand program expectations and the steps needed to pursue their claim so that payments can be made properly and timely. With this understanding the agency is engaged in our “plain language” initiative where we are revising all public facing communications to better explain the program requirements and to help the process be more seamless. Our plain language initiative is targeted to be complete by April of 2023.

A factor that has negatively impacted the agency’s ability to meet the acceptable level of performance for the timely payment of benefits has been the backlog in our adjudication work. The agency has had a concentrated effort to eliminate the backlog of claims needing to be adjudicated so that benefits, if warranted, can be issued. The adjudication backlog has been eliminated as of October 2022.

As the agency has been able to eliminate the backlog in adjudication, we have seen an increase in the number of appeals filed. The agency holds regular operations meetings to address our work with the current backlog in appeals both lower and higher level. We have implemented strategies to help in this area as well. The efforts include hiring of additional staff, issue spotting and block docketing. We have reassigned staff from other areas within the agency to assist with administrative tasks to allow for a more efficient workflow. Management is evaluating the standard operating procedures in this area as well and will be making changes to streamline the work wherever possible. As in other areas of the agency the area of lower and higher-level appeals has seen an influx of new staff as well. Management is providing training and retraining as necessary. The agency is also looking to leverage technology to support this division. The agency has engaged with staff from USDOL to assist in opportunities such as robotic processing automation (RPA).

Another key area of focus will be on the proper recording of the issue detection date. We have many new staff in the claims taking and adjudication process. Our UI trainer will

produce and provide training to UI staff on the topic of “Issue Detection Date” by January 30, 2023.

First Payments Intrastate and Interstate full weeks, within 14/21 days and 35 days.

Although a substantial increase in the Adjudication workload was experienced during Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, efforts have been made on multiple fronts to reduce this backlog which has impacted First Pay Promptness. Deputy resources were refocused to give priority to potential ineligibility issues once benefits have been pursued by the claimant. Adjudicator staffing level has increased in response to the higher workload figures and separately mandatory overtime hours have been implemented.

Several projects have been undertaken to allow for an increased readiness for the adjudication of claims issues. Adjudication has recently partnered with the Customer Contact Center who are using representatives to ensure liability is correct, necessary forms sent, and any statements taken before issues are assigned to a deputy for adjudication. Additionally, representatives have been able to clear certain specified issue types that were mistakenly created by the claimant and thus identified as a nonissue.

Training initiatives are ongoing with additional adjudicators currently in an intensive instructional training and review period. These adjudicators in training, all other Adjudication staff, and Benefit departments staff have been made aware of the DOL standard for First Pay Promptness to garner more of an ownership mentality. Management staff will review the performance of the first payment promptness monthly. They will discuss successful practices and seek improvements to current processes and discuss new initiatives as necessary.

Lower Authority Appeals Timeliness – 30/45 days.

LAA has a backlog of over 100k appeals. The large number of claims received in the years of 2020 and 2021 having made their way through claims intake and adjudication are now being appealed. LAA is the last department to be impacted by the claims filed as a result of the pandemic. VEC appeals employees are not using the full functionality of the system and there is too much reliance on the paper folder. (Typists are not uploading decisions; there are bottlenecks at Keying, Document Retrieval, and File Assembly stations.) Less qualified Examiners hired via the Rapid Hiring system still struggle with writing and dictating decisions affecting the number of decisions they can promptly issue. Employees are too spread out – over two buildings and several floors/spaces. Keyers are not sufficiently knowledgeable about appeals to be able to correctly identify issues that need to be appealed. There are still system issues stemming from how the benefits application was designed and implemented. (Example: DRRT had the wrong codes that caused stop pay indicator to stop payment of benefits. The system in Benefits is generating, printing and mailing duplicate overpayment decisions, sometimes 20 or 30, for the same claimant, causing the claimant to file that number of appeals.) These types of problems cause customers to complain, and time, energy and effort is taken to try to address those

complaints. Complaints from customers. Researching and responding to these complaints take time. When asked to move these ahead of appeals previously filed, scheduling is impacted.

Efforts Moving Forward

Expand the Block Scheduling Initiative to include raising the number of Examiners conducting block scheduled hearings to up to 7 Examiners (increasing the number of decisions/orders resolved from 196 per week to 420 per week); assign 6 experienced, certified Deputies to hold block docket hearings on cases which include a timeliness issue, (resulting in up to 360 decisions/orders per week); hire highly trained contract staff to join the Monetary Determination Team to resolve invalid determinations with orders.

Develop an ongoing training program for all appeals employees to bring them up to speed with the full functionality of the new system and hire more experienced Examiners and organize staff to take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of current Examiner staff.

Move all Examiners from the expansion office to the Central Office, Brookfield.

Initiatives such as “issue spotting” on documents submitted as appeals resulted in all hearing officers pulled off hearings for multiple weeks, during which time no decisions or orders were issued. This initiative and others (such as tracking productivity utilizing multiple google/excel sheets, pulling all staff efforts to one work area, such as keying appeals) caused multiple resignations due to frequent changes in daily workload, and bottleneck situations in other work areas. Adjudication’s rapid hiring, and contracting with staffing agencies greatly increased its productivity, which resulted in a significant increase in appeals. Staff level was not adequate to make a dent in the backlog number. LAA's new plan includes cross training employees to be able to work in multiple areas as needed, implementing new scheduling processes, hiring more experienced Examiners, putting employees in work teams to improve the efficiency of the appeals process from beginning to end, and working with IT on enhancements to the VUIS system.

Improve our Issue Spotting process by creating positions for qualified, appeals persons to review and issue spot all incoming appeals and change the File Appeal form to include VUIS claim and issue IDs to more easily identify the issue to be appealed.

Continue to identify problems with VUIS and bring them to the attention of the Vendor and VEC IT.

Improve our response system for complaints: Dedicate staff to 1. Research and address the complaints; 2. Handle the processing of the case if asked to move it ahead in the appeal process; 3. enlarge the Phone Team to increase the number of claimants/employers who actually have the opportunity to speak to a representative about their appeal; 4. Provide Knowledge Articles for the Call Center to provide information that may address some complaints.

LAA (and HAA) management monitor and assess reports on a weekly and monthly basis to monitor the effectiveness of planned actions for achieving performance goals and addressing the increasing numbers of appeals and case backlogs against case aging and promptness standards. Every decision from LAA is also proofed on a daily basis by at least a senior examiner, supervisor or manager prior to mailing for quality control purposes. Regular meetings are also held to discuss planned actions to deal with these issues that go to the heart of our operations.

E. Reporting Deficiencies

The Virginia Employment Commission transitioned to a new automated benefits system in November 2021. The agency for a time had difficulty producing and submitting all ETA reports. The Virginia Unemployment Insurance System (VUIS) is now producing the required reports. All delinquent reports have been forwarded to ETA.

F. Customer Service Surveys (optional)

In coordination with Ombudsman and Customer Advocate staff, the agency is collecting feedback on the usability of its unemployment insurance system. The feedback includes information on problem areas of creating an account or specific questions that may be misunderstood in the claim filing process. The agency has also undertaken a telephone survey of claimants and a customer satisfaction survey.

G. Other:

The Virginia Employment Commission is in the process of preparing our response to the CARES Act, monitoring report that was issued March 7, 2022. We anticipate completing our response by November 1, 2022.

The Virginia Employment Commission requested assistance from the USDOL Tiger Team just after the resource was announced. Our agency engaged in a conversation with the Tiger Team. We volunteered to be one of the first states to receive an assessment and initial recommendations. However, this was prior to the award of the equity and access grant. Many of the Tiger Team recommendations overlapped initiatives being pursued under the equity and access grant (UIPL 23-21), which was awarded to our agency in March 2022. The VEC has subsequently had additional conversations with the Tiger Team. The most recent meeting was held on September 9, 2022, with another scheduled on September 30, 2022. There have been lessons learned as the Tiger Team has gone from an initial four states participating to now over thirty states participating. We are eager to learn of the new strategies the Tiger Team can outline for us.

The VEC subsequently applied for Tiger Team grants in February 2023. With the three grant amounts awarded from the U.S. Department of Labor, the VEC is pursuing the following projects: Robotic Process Automation (RPA) Development & Implementation, Virginia Unemployment Insurance System (VUIS)- Identity Theft System (ITS), and Auto-Implementation of Voluntary Quit Appellate Decisions.

The RPA project assists Virginia in meeting the National Priorities outlined in UIPL No. 09-23 by improving program performance through automation of manual tasks, which are impediments to accuracy and timeliness when processing claims and appeals. With the RPA development, the agency has seen automation in scheduling, decisions, and mailings.

The ITS system will allow search, sandboxing, and review of identified fraudulent activity as a divergent work stream from VUIS. The Auto-Implementation of Voluntary Quit Decisions will cover decisions involving voluntary quits which result in an affirmation of the prior decision.

H. Assurances:

- a. Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO).
- b. Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards.
- c. Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting, and Recordkeeping.
- d. Assurance of Program Quality.
- e. Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds.
- f. Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR Part 93).
- g. Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR Part 98).
- h. Assurance of Contingency Planning.

Provide the most recent dates for the following:

- Information Technology (IT) Contingency Plan Implemented: 04/15/2010
- IT Contingency Plan Reviewed/Updated: reviewed on 12/22/2022 and updated on 01/09/2023.
- IT Contingency Plan Tested: September 2023.

- i. Assurance of Conformity and Compliance.
- j. Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security.

Provide the most recent dates for the following:

- Risk Assessment Conducted: 4/26/21
- System Security Plan Reviewed/Updated: 7/05/22

k. Assurance of Confidentiality

l. Assurance of Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

- The VEC has experienced a large turnover of staff to include our UI Director, Chief of Benefits and Benefit Payment Control Manager. We will have the new members of management as well as employees within the UI Division complete the DUA training module through NASWA by December 31, 2022. <http://learning.naswa.org/public/contentdetails/8692/disaster-unemployment-assistance>
- The VEC does have a DUA standard operating procedure (OP) manual. The DUA OP manual will be reviewed by management so that it may be used during a major disaster declaration.

4. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS (CAPS)

CAPs are expected as a part of the SQSP when State's annual performance does not meet the established criteria for core measures, Secretary's Standards, UI program, assurances, and other program deficiencies identified in the annual SQSP guidance provided by the Department. The CAP must list both specific milestones for key corrective actions or improvement activities, and the completion date for each milestone.

Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness

State: Virginia

Federal Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

Performance Measures:

ALP: Greater than or equal to 80%

CAP Based on 04/01/2021-03/31/2022 Performance Level: 11.89%

State's Target/Actual Performance:

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 20.0%

Actual: 30.7%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 40.0%

Actual: 24.2%

6/30/23 Quarter 3

Target: 60.0%

Actual: 28.5%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 80.0%

Actual: 38.5%

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide:

A. The reason for the deficiency.

The catalyst for the backlog started with historic filing numbers during the pandemic coinciding with the complication of added federal programs for which the legacy mainframe database system could not handle. The system also forced reliance on more cumbersome manual tracking methods when examining progress metrics. Additional factors included the onset of the pandemic occurring in the wake of relocating the central office and cutting staff to historically low numbers. Hiring new staff during the earlier stages of the pandemic proved difficult, and then once hired the new employees had to undergo abbreviated training classes to onboard as quickly as possible with as little impact to supervisor bandwidth as possible due to the lack of a fully staffed training department. Finally, in November 2021, the database system migrated from the legacy mainframe to a more modern graphical user interface system which required retraining of staff concerning all business process areas and getting through new system teething issues.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

The agency will mine data for better analysis of the backlog and predicting incoming volume. Preserving those data mining and analysis methods as tools rather than single use efforts will allow for better strategy and real time assessment to become a more agile team. The agency will research and implement new ways to leverage technology for case assignment and tracking purposes to adjudicate items more efficiently. Additionally, more comprehensive training for staff will lead to more efficient work output, as well as, reworked operating reference documents/tools. Those work streams will be tracked in a medium more accessible to supervisory staff through greater use of the new database system's reporting functions as well as incorporation and consolidation of other technology based solutions rather than a myriad of manual processes. The agency will also establish

better lines of communication between different work group units and departments to aid in identifying trends and troubleshooting items stuck in different stages of processing.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

n/a

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

Assessment is the ending operative component inherent to the enhanced data mining and modeling action items. Monitoring and assessment for training can be tracked via spreadsheet and item check off for singular milestone events. As stated in part B., productivity will be measured utilizing superior methodology, and its outputs will be assessed with greater frequency due to the larger accessibility and dissemination to frontline supervisory staff. Better dialogue and information flow between different work units and departments can be monitored through meeting calendar schedules and for any work item processes, through the means for standardizing communication for those work item requests between units.

Milestones

1. Model current and expected workflow better by data mining the backlog of adjudication items and of other dependent workstreams, as well as, examining pre-pandemic numbers.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

It is a formal initiative item for our agency transformation efforts, and we also are requesting help from a newly onboarded data analyst at the VEC.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

This transformation initiative has developed into a management scorecard that will provide visibility of claim and workload volumes as well as performance measures in real-time.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Workflows are reported upon daily and reviewed in weekly meetings with management, ultimately becoming the management scorecard.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This milestone is both complete and ongoing with the use of the management scorecard.

2. Place all deputies hired after February 2020 through a comprehensive formal training series, develop better ongoing/operations guidance practices.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The first group commenced classes November 2022.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The first group of Hearing Officer Trainees completed the comprehensive instructional training period with a portion of the class progressing through the certification process.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Hearing Officer Trainees from the first group receiving training have been certified as having met DOL BTQ standards. Case review for certification of those in the second group to receive training are on-going.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Additional Hearing Officer Trainees have completed the instructional training program while quality reviews/BTQ scoring of cases continue to ensure deputies are meeting DOL adjudication standards.

3. Research and implement better case assignment and issue tracking solutions.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

We found that our current system is incapable of taking into account multiple parameters for assignments, so we are researching RPA technology to do so.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The RPA Adjudication assignment project is in a pause status in favor of a higher priority initiative. Instead, manual workload assignments are being made by technicians.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Manual workload assignment continues as it has shown to provide the ability to monitor staffing and workload needs in real time, enabling staff to very quickly pivot or scale-up work assignments as needed for adjudication.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

The manual workload assignments continue to meet the department's real time workload and staff production monitoring needs.

4. Research and implement better productivity tracking solutions.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

We requested to engage a newly onboarded data analyst at the VEC and will be doing so in Q12023.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The Performance Management Scorecard has been created to provide the real-time viewing of claim and issue volumes as well as live looks at the Agency's performance towards DOL measurements. Additionally, a productivity tracker for all adjudicators is currently nearing the end of the development phase.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

The productivity tracker remains in development. First Payment Timeliness and Decision Timeliness are being tracked on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis from which progress is charted and discussed weekly.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

An Adjudication productivity tracker has been developed and is now in use.

5. Establish better communication channels between work groups.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

This is a formal initiative in our agency transformation efforts, and we have begun weekly meetings to identify issues and breakdowns.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Regular meetings have commenced between all the departments within Benefits as well as the Training department, and Customer Contact Center.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This is complete. Regular meetings have been established and are on-going.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This is complete. Regular meetings have been established and are on-going.

Lower Authority Appeals Promptness

State: Virginia

Federal Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

Performance Measures:

ALP

Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals: less than or equal to 30 days

Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse - 30 days: greater than or equal to 60%

Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse - 45 days: greater than or equal to 80%

CAP Based on 04/01/2021 – 03/31/2022 Performance Level

Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals: 310.10

Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse - 30 days: 2.40%

Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse - 45 days: 3.70%

State's Target/Actual Performance, Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse – 30 Days

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 2.1%

Actual: 0.1%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 2.4%

Actual: 0.1%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 2.9%

Actual: 0.1%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 3.0%

Actual: 2.6%

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. The reason for the deficiency.

LAA has a backlog of over 100k appeals. The large number of claims received in the years of 2020 and 2021 having made their way through claims intake and adjudication are now being appealed. LAA is the last department to be impacted by the claims filed because of the pandemic. VEC appeals employees are not using the full functionality of the system and there is too much reliance on the paper folder. (Typists are not uploading decisions; there are bottlenecks at Keying, Document Retrieval, and File Assembly stations.) Less qualified Examiners hired via the Rapid Hiring system still struggle with writing and dictating decisions affecting the number of decisions they are able to promptly issue. Employees are too spread out – over two buildings and several floors/spaces. Keyers are not sufficiently knowledgeable about appeals to be able to correctly identify issues that need to be appealed. There are still system issues stemming from how the benefits application was designed and implemented. (Example: DRRT had the wrong codes that caused stop pay indicator to stop payment of benefits. The system in Benefits is generating, printing and mailing duplicate overpayment decisions, sometimes 20 or 30, for the same claimant, causing the claimant to file that number of appeals.) These types of problems cause customers to complain, and time, energy and effort is taken to try to address those complaints. Complaints from customers. Researching and responding to these complaints take time. When asked to move these ahead of appeals previously filed, scheduling is impacted.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

Expand the Block Scheduling Initiative to include raising the number of Examiners conducting block scheduled hearings to up to 7 Examiners (increasing the number of decisions/orders resolved from 196 per week to 420 per week); assign 6 experienced, certified Deputies to hold block docket hearings on cases which include a timeliness issue, (resulting in up to 360 decisions/orders per week); hire highly trained contract staff to join the Monetary Determination Team to resolve invalid determinations with orders. Develop an ongoing training program for all appeals employees to bring them up to speed with the full functionality of the new system. Hire more experienced Examiners and organize staff to take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of current Examiner staff. Move all

Examiners from the expansion office to the Central Office, Brookfield. Improve our Issue Spotting process by creating positions for qualified, appeals persons to review and issue spot all incoming appeals and change the File Appeal form to include VUIS claim and issue IDs to more easily identify the issue to be appealed. Continue to identify problems with VUIS and bring them to the attention of the Vendor and VEC IT. Improve our response system for complaints: Dedicate staff to 1. Research and address the complaints; 2. Handle the processing of the case if asked to move it ahead in the appeal process; 3. enlarge the Phone Team to increase the number of claimants/employers who actually have the opportunity to speak to a representative about their appeal; 4. Provide Knowledge Articles for the Call Center to provide information that may address some complaints.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

Initiatives such as “issue spotting” on documents submitted as appeals resulted in all hearing officers pulled off hearings for multiple weeks, during which time no decisions or orders were issued. This initiative and others (such as tracking productivity utilizing multiple google/excel sheets, pulling all staff efforts to one work area, such as keying appeals) caused multiple resignations due to frequent changes in daily workload, and bottleneck situations in other work areas. Adjudication’s rapid hiring, and contracting with staffing agencies greatly increased its productivity, which resulted in a significant increase in appeals. Staff level was not adequate to make a dent in the backlog number. LAA's new plan includes cross training employees to be able to work in multiple areas as needed, implementing new scheduling processes, hiring more experienced Examiners, putting employees in work teams to improve the efficiency of the appeals process from beginning to end, and working with IT on enhancements to the VUIS system.

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

LAA (and HAA) management monitor and assess reports on a weekly and monthly basis to monitor the effectiveness of planned actions for achieving performance goals and addressing the increasing numbers of appeals and case backlogs against case aging and promptness standards. Every decision from LAA is also proofed on a daily basis by at least a senior examiner, supervisor or manager prior to mailing for quality control purposes. Regular meetings are also held to discuss planned actions to deal with these issues that go to the heart of our operations.

Milestones

1. Increase number of hearings being scheduled per week by 35 percent. Increase will be accomplished by adding more classified and restricted Examiners and scheduling more examiners for block dockets (10 or more per block, 2 blocks per day).

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Approval for ten classified Appeal Examiner Senior positions; positions posted. Approval for five classified Appeal Examiner positions. Block team fully operational conducted hearings issued more than 60 decisions/orders per week. Established Blitz team to conduct hearings on an eligibility issue, training ongoing. Established and trained approximately 35 adjudicators providing administrative support, such as, document retrieval and uploading; another group of adjudicators remotely conducted hearings on 619(D) issue and issued orders on untimely appeals. Both groups were trained in each workflow and provided daily CHAT support with Senior Appeals Examiners and Supervisors. A third group of adjudicators established to remotely type decisions and orders from case management system; training underway through end of quarter.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Five Examiners hired in classified positions; Four Appeals Examiners have resigned. Block team is fully operational, and a Blitz team has begun hearing targeted issues. Other teams of Appeals Examiners are working on appeals that can be resolved through orders.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

The Block team increased the number of decisions/orders issued from 60 to 75 per week. We have decreased the allotted time for separation and eligibility hearings to increase the number of scheduled hearings for Examiners not on the block docket schedule. This change resulted in an increase of scheduled hearings from 6 to 10 per day for Examiners not on the block schedule. Currently we are in the process of hiring additional wage Examiners (up to 20).

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Hired 9 wage attorneys who conduct hearings and issue decisions remotely. In the process of hiring up to 11 more. As review universes have decreased, additional AEs returned to hearings. Exploring block docketing for additional hearing types.

2. Review workflows to restructure appeals to take advantage of the VUIS system. Restructure will be accomplished by the designation of a coordinator to examine each existing workflow and determine how it may be enhanced by VUIS. Stage one is to hire the coordinator.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The coordinator has been designated and is in the process of reviewing the units within FLA along with the Chief AE and Clerk of FLA. Cross-training of staff in process to ensure coverage of all workflows.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

FLA administrative staff changes have resulted in better communication between Clerk and staff. Cross training has been successful in document retrieving, keying appeals, and scheduling areas. Appeals Examiners have also been trained in administrative areas to provide them the ability to resolve issues in a case discovered after scheduling, which allows the case to go forward and not returned to administrative support for additional work.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

The coordinator has worked to develop a scheduling BOT to facilitate scheduling of the block docket and reallocate resources to other administrative tasks. The scheduling BOT should be operational by the following quarter.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

The scheduling bot is currently in use for block style hearings. It will become even more useful as we transition more hearings to block scheduling.

3. Move all Examiners from the expansion office to the Central Office, Brookfield. This will decrease the time it takes to get documents to examiners and for examiners to submit their decisions for proofing and mailing.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Completed.

4. Create a permanent issue spotting position(s) for qualified, experienced appeals persons to review and issue spot all incoming appeals. This will decrease the time between receiving the appeal and keying it.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Positions approved for classified Appeals Examiners. Auto-issue spotting initiative created; development paused due to other priorities. Contractors trained on issue spotting with VEC Appeals Examiner overseeing daily work.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Position has not been filled due to budget considerations. Changes to the online appeal filing process through UI-Direct will make issue spotting easier for keyers. Changes also include limiting the appeals that may be filed online to those where decisions have been issued. We are implementing technology changes that will eliminate the need for an experienced appeals person to review each appeal and issue spot the appealable issues.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Completed. Currently one full-time Examiner has been designated to perform issue spotting and a second Examiner is being trained to assist in this process. Once the issue is spotted, the Examiners key the appeal which reduces the time from intake to scheduling. Plans are in the works to begin training two admin staff to also issue spot and key.

5. Make changes to the online appeal process to decrease the time between receiving the appeal and keying it. Changes include displaying the Claim ID and Issue ID on the online appeal pdf created by CSS and ESS and creating a BOT that will automatically file appeals filed by CSS and ESS where the Claim ID and Issue ID are populated.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Bots are currently being developed for FLA, but not for keying appeals. The keying appeal bot is on hold. A manual form was created for individuals who cannot file their appeal online. A training was conducted with customer service staff to provide information necessary to assist customers to file appeals using the manual form. The bots in development will help prepare decisions to be mailed, by uploading the decision, completing the screens necessary to record the decision results in VUIS, and sending the decision for printing. Research underway for a machine to lease that will fold and stuff decisions and orders.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Due to the need to pause technology builds to add additional cyber security tools, work was delayed on the development of the upload UI-Direct and ESS appeals Bots. We have developed and implemented 4 appeals Bots that upload and mail FLA decisions and orders and appeal documents.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

The testing phase has begun for a scheduling system enhancement that will help decrease the time from intake to an appeal scheduled for a hearing.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Scheduling bot is in use for block style hearings. Exploring efax system to reduce paper and decrease processing time for faxed appeals. Paper mailed appeals are being scanned more efficiently by utilizing central records for the task.

6. Develop an ongoing training program for all appeals employees to bring them up to speed with the full functionality of the new Virginia Unemployment Insurance system (VUIS). This includes weekly Friday meetings with an experienced VUIS user with each of the various groups to address specific concerns as well as scheduling periodic cross training sessions to introduce appeals employees to the entire appeals functionality. This will reduce the number of mistakes that cause issues throughout the appeals process.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Meetings have been held with the Phone Team, Appeals Examiners, document retrievers and notice team. Cross training underway in each workflow. Development of position to focus on different workflows to refine process & decrease bottleneck areas of processes.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Bi-weekly meetings with all Appeals Examiners to discuss FLA changes was implemented. Training sessions to be scheduled next quarter.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Bi-weekly meetings continue to ensure Examiners are aware of additional changes and special projects to decrease the backlog. Targeted training on VUIS functions continues to occur with groups of Examiners and groups of administrative staff. Training at this time is ad-hoc.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Examiners still receive spot training at bi-weekly meetings. New examiners or wage attorneys participate in a training program that includes lectures, reading, observation, writing and feedback.

7. Improve our response system process for requests for information, including complaints: i.e., assign staff to process requests, enlarge the Phone Team, and Provide Knowledge Articles for the Call Center.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Initiated Auto-Assistant on phone system to provide menu of options to provide customers with information and decrease number of customers that need to speak with the phone team. Met with legal aid representatives, answered questions & provided information to improve customer service. Began training on group of adjudicators to type decisions and orders from case management system to decrease wait for resolution of cases. Ongoing meetings with Benefits/Benefit Charge Unit to work together to resolve overpayments to increase resolution of cases. Assigned teams of Appeal Examiner Seniors & Appeal Examiner Supervisors to work spreadsheets in which Benefits staff has highlighted cases with errors to resolve with issuance of orders to vacate appeal & refer matter.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Updates have been made to the website, to the knowledge articles the call center uses and to the information provided workforce centers to assist staff in helping customers file appeals and learn the status of their appeals. In addition, we are adding API to the IVR (voice response system) to provide more information to customers about their appeal.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

API (Application Program Interface) for the IVR (interactive voice response system) is in production and the testing phase has launched to provide customers with docket numbers, scheduled hearing date and times, status of appeal(s), and appeal(s) resolutions.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

In addition to API for IVR, leadership has attempted to respond to questions and complaints more quickly by engaging knowledgeable people more quickly and keeping everyone in the loop of communication.

8. Update and Resubmit any Federal Reports for appeals reporting our numbers to DOL as needed due to the switch to VUIS. This will include reviewing data in VUIS for the months of November 2021 through March 2022 and then providing that information to the reporting system to re-run appeals reports.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The process of updating Appeals Federal reports is well under way. All reports from March 2020 to September 2022 have been re-run in the VUIS system. They are now in the process of being updated and uploaded to the Federal Reports system.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Completed.

Improper Payments Measure

State: Virginia

Federal Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

Performance Measures:

Improper Payments Measure:

ALP: less than 10%

CAP Based on PIIA Year 2021 BAM Batches 202027-202126

48.48%

State's Target/Actual Performance

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 40.00%

Actual: 44.18%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 35.00%

Actual: 29.78%

6/30/23 Quarter 3

Target: 30.00%

Actual: 29.78%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 25.00%

Actual: 22.52%

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the VEC experienced very high claim volumes and a significant increase in backlogs. Adjudication areas were affected tremendously with separation issues as well as other eligibility issues. The pandemic introduced thousands of

people to the UI program for the first time and there were many misconceptions. The ability to communicate effective benefit eligibility to a claimant was hindered by the large volume of calls to our Customer Contact Center. We expect to see improvement based on the decrease in the adjudication backlog.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

The VEC has worked diligently to reduce backlog of work being adjudicated by September 30, 2022. We will be in the position to identify issues and render a timely decision based on separation and other eligibility issues. Our wait times for reaching the Customer Contact Center has improved drastically and this will ensure claimants understand benefit eligibility. The VEC has recently hired a UI Training Manager who will, along with her staff, help develop and deliver training for hearing officers. An overall standardized training will ensure claims are being handled effectively. Training modules developed through NASWA will also be used as well. The VEC has also embarked on a plain language initiative that will more clearly communicate UI benefit eligibility requirements, so all reporting requirements are met including the benefit year earnings are understood by the claimant who seek benefits.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

The VEC was not able to meet the target ALP due to the hiring and new staff and the implementation of our new UI Modernized system and this had a great impact on the success of improving the plan. With new staff being trained up on the UI Modernized system as well as knowledge of benefit eligibility should reduce the improper payments and ensure claimants are receiving timely decisions.

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

Scheduling a monthly meeting check-in between the BPC Management Staff and the Chief of Integrity and Compliance to ensure performance goals are being met on individual levels. If we find areas that warrant improvement, we will move towards making the necessary changes in those particular areas. With the increased training and development of a more uniformed training for the unit, all employees will be better trained at identifying and detecting overpayments. Unfortunately we are soon going to lose much of the staff we have worked with to train and deal with fraud and overpayment due to budget restrictions. The

VEC will continue to develop strategies to try to maintain momentum in prevention of overpayment and fraud and catching the fraud situations as quickly as possible to minimize losses.

Milestones

1. Using our plain language initiative, benefit documents and other communications will be reconstructed so that information is more easily understood by claimants.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Plain language has been implemented in our communications and on our website. We have also added a short video to explain things better to the public. Plans have been made to give more complete and standardized training to all staff. Standard Operating Procedures for all tasks are being developed to become more proficient and efficient in our work.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Standard Operating Procedures and training to do specific jobs have been developed and utilized.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Review and revision of communications for plain language is ongoing. Improvements seen in the improper payment rate (based on latest available data for calendar year 2022) are resulting from communication revisions, staff training, and Standard Operating Procedures.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Review and revision of communications for plain language is ongoing. Improvements seen in the improper payment rate (based on latest available data for year 4/1/2022 to 3/31/2023) are resulting from communication revisions, staff training, and Standard Operating Procedures.

2. Review quarterly results from the Quality Assurance Unit concerning Improper Payments and review these results with the Deputy Commissioner for UI, UI Director, Chief of Integrity and compliance, Benefit Payment Control Manager, and other management staff in order to adjust our strategic approach towards addressing this issue.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

This is the 1st quarter for this milestone. The review of QA results has taken place. While no changes in our strategic approach have been realized, we will further evaluate processes in future quarters.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The UI Director is receiving weekly reports on improper payments found by Quality Assurance through BAM, and quarterly meetings are being held to alleviate this issue.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This milestone can be marked as completed. Quarterly results are being provided to leadership for review and strategy.

3. Conduct quarterly training with the various work units within the VEC that interface with the public to include our Monetary Unit, Customer Contact Centers, Local Workforce Centers and Adjudication Centers so that the root causes contributing to improper payments are understood.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

VEC has worked on standardized training and making people more aware of checking the wages on claimant who call in about their claims. We are striving to make the public more aware of fraud and other parts of our own agency aware of fraud prevention.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

We have continued to conduct training as needed to reduce improper payments.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

VEC continues conducting regular training to reduce improper payments.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This can be marked as completed and regular training is occurring.

4. All BPC investigators will complete NASWA training on Improper Payments to include the knowledge exchange library.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

VEC has been participating in NASWA training and meeting with NASWA for learning best practices and getting better ideas on how to be more effective in prevention of improper payments and new problems that we may anticipate and

ideas on how to get ahead of these potential problems.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

NASWA training has continued for all investigators.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Standardized training for establishing Benefit Payment Control Investigations has been completed. The BPC Unit participates in NASWA training and meetings to get best practices information and ideas from other states.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Completed.

5. Establish an exchange of information with other Virginia state agencies (Department of Social Services, Department of Medical Assistance Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development) so that any return to employment can be communicated to the VEC.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The VEC has been working on a fifth crossmatch. We already have incarceration crossmatches, New Hire, State New Hire, Quarterly and soon we will have a Social Services crossmatch as well to make sure that we have many different ways of quickly stopping improper payments.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The SIDES program is being expanded to include wage audits that will hopefully allow us more information to set up overpayments faster. The VEC is also pursuing a crossmatch with Department of Social Services.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Our new crossmatch with Social Services is in development. The BPC unit continues to investigate "hits" received from crossmatches and continues providing staff training to investigators on crossmatches.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

VEC continues to work on implementing new crossmatches.

6. Enhance the Employee Work Profile (EWP) for Investigators to highlight their individual responsibility in helping to achieve the agency's goal in preventing improper payments

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Employee work profiles have been updated and enhanced to better present the job duties and expectations. Evaluations are being done every 6 months on employees. Completed.

Detection of Overpayments

State: Virginia

Federal Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

Performance Measure:

Detection of Overpayments - Core Measure - greater than or equal to 50% & less than or equal to 95% of Detectable/Recoverable Ops are Established for Recovery

ALP: Greater than or equal to 50% & Less than or equal to 95%

CAP Based on 04/01/2021 – 03/31/2022 Performance: 23.40%

State's Target/Actual Performance:

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 27.00%

Actual: 59.16%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 35.00%

Actual: 59.53%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 43.00%

Actual: 59.63%

09/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 51.00%

Actual: 58.67%

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

With the implementation of VUIS along with new staff focused on potential fraud, a majority of Investigators and resources within the unit were dedicated to preventing fraud. However, our performance moving forward is expected to improve based on the familiarity and understanding of UI benefits as well as the UI Modernized System.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

We recently made interdepartmental changes to allow staff to be able to target improper overpayments and evaluate actions that cause the issues. Continue to work with management to evaluate current procedures to look for areas of improvement within the training. Cross-training new staff within the unit will improve the overall performance and ability to detect an overpayment. Constantly measuring the accuracy of Investigators findings will ensure staff is correctly evaluating overpayment. UI Trainer will effectively train entire staff to improve overall performance. The VEC has started working on the crossmatches with the National Directory of New Hires, State Directory of New Hires, Quarterly Crossmatches, Incarceration Crossmatches, and soon to start Social Services Crossmatches.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

The Virginia Employment Commission was hit by potential fraud which caused the majority of the unit to focus on preventing benefits being paid on fraudulent accounts. With new staff being trained on potential fraud and prioritizing potential fraud, the collection activity was paused. Overpayment training was placed on hold to ensure the staff was trained to identify potential fraud. We currently have a team of 10 in place focused on overpayments and we plan to increase the training unit wide.

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

Scheduling a monthly meeting check-in between the BPC Management Staff and the Chief of Integrity and Compliance to ensure performance goals are being met on individual levels. If

we find areas that warrant improvement, we will move towards making the necessary changes in those particular areas. With the increased training and development of a more uniformed training for the unit, all employees will be better trained at identifying and detecting overpayments.

Milestones

1. Chief of Integrity and Compliance and BPC Manager will meet monthly with UI Trainer to assess training needs based on staff performance

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

We have been working with a trainer to provide training for the staff on the VUIS system on standardized methods to conduct investigations and work with knowledge obtained in verification of real person claims as well as investigative processes to detect and address overpayments, and follow-up to discovering overpayments. Next quarter the training should start on all these processes and we will have someone document processes of the clerical staff for future cross training.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Training for working New Hire Cross Matches and other types of investigation for true name people (TNP) has been provided and the investigation staff are working cases and being checked for accuracy. Additional training is also being provided to inform staff of the laws, statutes of limitations and what is needed to pursue in courts. We have begun working the crossmatches again and are working cases regularly hoping to prevent large overpayments. The VEC has upgraded SIDES crossmatches as well.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

The UI Trainer continues to work with the Chief of Integrity and Compliance and BPC Manager regarding training. Training continues with BPC investigators to include certification training to meet BTQ requirements for investigations.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This is complete and training is ongoing.

2. Supervisors will provide weekly feedback to staff concerning their performance in the detection of overpayments in order to focus on areas of improvement

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Supervisors and management have been meeting and working together to develop the best processes to address discovery, setting up and addressing the overpayments. Management has also been developing standards or procedures. These discussions also help management become aware of other challenges throughout the agency.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Documentation of duties and processes have been noted so that we have knowledge written about specialized tasks. Supervisors and management have been meeting and working together to develop the best processes to address discovery, setting up and addressing the overpayments. Management has also been developing Standard Operating Procedures. Management and supervisors work to try to develop better processes and maintaining records.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

BPC Manager and Chief of Integrity and Compliance are holding weekly meetings with staff to improve performance to include training sessions on any problems detected during the week.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Complete and will be continued.

3. Require staff to participate in NASWA training to include UI Fraud Investigator Training, UI Operations Integrity Training and Integrity Data Hub Training to incorporate those practices for better overpayment detection methods

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Staff is regularly participating in NASWA training and UI Fraud Investigator training is being initiated with the trainer to start in January 2023. Other training is encouraged and provided as well.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Staff is continuing to train with NASWA, but also Standard Operating Procedures are being developed and training implemented to deal with the crossmatches and other methods of catching overpayments earlier and setting them up.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This is complete and on-going. Staff continues to participate in all available NASWA and IDH trainings.

4. Enhance the Employee Work Profile (EWP) for Investigators to highlight their individual responsibility in helping to achieve the agency's goal in detecting overpayments.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Employee work profiles have been revamped to better represent the actual work and tasks being performed by the staff.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Mid-year evaluations on staff are being done to make sure staff is doing their jobs and understanding responsibilities and tasks.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This has been completed. Staff have been issued revised EWP's that meet this goal.

5. Crossmatches have resumed, and an additional crossmatch added.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Crossmatches were resumed and work on an additional crossmatch with potential to help detect overpayments is in the process of being established with other state agencies. Planned training for all investigative staff to understand all the types of overpayments, causes and what to look for when investigating claims. The VEC is still in the process of adding another crossmatch, plus we are going to try to implement a faster response from employers through the SIDES reports as well as expanding our use of SIDES and creating a Social Services crossmatch.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Crossmatches have resumed and work continues to detect overpayments quickly. We are in conversation with the Social Security Administration to add the PUPS crossmatch for prisoners.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

BPC staff continue to work crossmatches, and VEC has been actively working with SSA on the development of the PUPS crossmatch.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Investigations of crossmatches has resumed.

6. Continuing to develop and run programs and bots to help detect overpayments and potential frauds as soon as possible with system triggers in place.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Continuing to run different programs and develop IT programs and Bots to assist in stopping overpayments as soon as possible. System triggers for issues that may indicate suspicious and potential fraud.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Continuing to run different programs and develop IT programs and Bots to assist in stopping overpayments as soon as possible. System triggers for issues that may indicate suspicious and potential fraud.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Continuing to run different programs and develop IT programs and Bots to assist in stopping overpayments as soon as possible. System triggers for issues that may indicate suspicious and potential fraud.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Continuing to run different programs and develop IT programs and Bots to assist in stopping overpayments as soon as possible. System triggers for issues that may indicate suspicious and potential fraud.

Tax Data Validation

State: Virginia

Federal Fiscal Year: 2023-2024 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

Performance Measure: Data Validation Tax - All Submitted and Passing

ALP – submitted and passing

CAP Based on validation year 2022 4/1/2021-3/31/2022

State's Target/Actual Performance

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: FAIL

Actual: FAIL

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: FAIL

Actual: FAIL

6/30/23 Quarter 3

Target: FAIL

Actual: FAIL

9/30/23 Quarter 4

Target: PASS

Actual: FAIL

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

Ongoing issues with the tax system and its programming led to discrepancies with system data vs federal reports. IT/new system vendor resources have been largely devoted to the new benefits system, effectively delaying resolution of these discrepancies.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

All populations have been run to assess current status and to determine specific areas contributing to individual failure. IT/new system vendor is currently working to address these areas for programming corrections with more resources now available. All populations will be run on a monthly basis to gauge improvement efforts until each pass and to assure consistency over time and/or to address any subsequent failures.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

Limited programming resources were available to address the programming flaws to achieve resolution of the known issues. Expanded resources will now be utilized with greater focus made to resolve the failures.

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

Quarterly runs of each population to guard against subsequent failures. Partner with IT/new system vendor to address immediately in the event of any future failures.

Milestones

1. Run each Tax Population to determine status of pass/fail of Report Validation.
Completion Date 3/31/2022.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

All populations failing.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

All populations failing.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

All populations failing.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

All populations failing.

2. Complete all areas of validation for populations passing Report Validation

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

All populations failing Report Validation

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

All populations failing Report Validation

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

All populations failing Report Validation

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

All populations failing Report Validation

3. Trouble tickets submitted to IT/new system vendor to address any/all failures

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Master ticket opened to address failures of all populations. Individual tickets per population will be opened if/when IT advises. Each population currently failing Report Validation as out of tolerance. Requested review/correction of programming of both validation and report data.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Master ticket opened to address failures of all populations. Individual tickets per population will be opened if/when IT advises. Each population currently failing Report Validation as out of tolerance. Requested review/correction of programming of both validation and report data.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Individual tickets currently open for each population. Dedicated IT resource assigned to assist. Each current ticket was opened on 4/14/2023 with a target completion date of 6/30/2023. Each remains in progress. Weekly meetings for IT prioritization are held with input from the Quality Assurance Manager regarding DV Tax.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Individual tickets currently open for each population. Dedicated IT resource assigned to assist. Each current ticket was opened on 4/14/2023 with a target completion date of 6/30/2023. Each remains in progress. Weekly meetings for IT prioritization are held with input from the Quality Assurance Manager regarding DV Tax.

First Payment Promptness

State: Virginia Federal Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Performance Measures:

CAP Based on 04/01/2021 - 03/31/2022 Performance

State's Target/Actual

First Payment Promptness: % of all 1st payments within 14/21 days after the compensable week ALP $\geq$ 87%.

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 60.0%

Actual: 45.1%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 67%

Actual: 43.7%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 77.0%

Actual: 46.4%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 87%

Actual: 49.5%

First Payment Promptness, 14/21 days Intrastate UI full weeks ALP $\geq$ 87%.

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 60.0%

Actual: 46.3%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 67.0%

Actual: 45.4%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 77%

Actual: 48%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 87%

Actual: 49.9%

First Payment Promptness, 14/21 days Interstate UI full weeks ALP $\geq$ 70%.

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 55%

Actual: 35.5%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 60%

Actual: 30.5%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 65%

Actual: 34.5%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 70%

Actual: 43.4%

First Payment Promptness, 35 days Intrastate UI full weeks ALP $\geq$ 93%.

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 70%

Actual: 72.2%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 78%

Actual: 66.6%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 86%

Actual: 71.2%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 93%

Actual: 76.8%

First Payment Promptness, 35 days Interstate UI full weeks ALP $\geq$ 78%.

12/31/2022 Quarter 1

Target: 70%

Actual: 57.2%

3/31/2023 Quarter 2

Target: 72%

Actual: 49.7%

6/30/2023 Quarter 3

Target: 75%

Actual: 57.1%

9/30/2023 Quarter 4

Target: 78%

Actual: 69.4%

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

This is a performance metric that Virginia was meeting and exceeding prior to the pandemic. The large number of claims received in the years of 2020 and 2021 proved to be the primary reason for the sharp decline in the acceptable level of performance. Specifically, claims that had separation or eligibility issues associated with them were the claims that usually failed to meet the first pay promptness standards. Delays in adjudication meant that when qualifying determinations were released, the resulting payment would be issued beyond the 14/21 day from the first compensable week.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

This area of performance within the unemployment insurance (UI) program relies on a complete understanding of the eligibility requirements by VEC staff. The agency has hired numerous new employees over the past two years and we have seen the departure of many seasoned employees. The VEC (UI Division) will provide training to employees so that staff inside and outside of the UI Division understand the program requirements so as to better assist our customers. The agency recognizes the need to ensure the benefit rights and responsibilities are communicated to our customers in a way that can be easily understood. Key management staff will monitor the performance in this area.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

N/A

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

Management staff will review the performance of the first payment promptness monthly. They will discuss successful practices and seek improvements to current processes and discuss new initiatives as necessary.

Milestones

1. Conduct training for staff in adjudication, call center operations and workforce services.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

UI Division/Adjudication Unit has a communications initiative and have begun weekly meetings to identify issues and breakdowns.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The first group of Hearing Officer Trainees completed the instructional period of the Agency's training program. Training sessions for other adjudicators as well as the call center staff are ongoing.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This milestone is both completed and on-going. There is regular training for staff to include weekly meetings between Customer Contact Center and Workforce Services staff to ensure understanding of processes. Adjudication training is regular and ongoing.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This milestone is both completed and on-going. There is regular training for staff to include weekly meetings between Customer Contact Center and Workforce Services staff to ensure understanding of processes. Adjudication training continues to be conducted on a regular basis.

2. Update information pertaining to the benefit rights and responsibilities for claimants. This is part of the agency plain language initiative.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

This initiative is ongoing and in the vetting process.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Updates have been made to the Benefits Manual using the model manual which have been uploaded to the VEC's website.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This initiative has been satisfied during the quarter ending 03/31/23.

3. The Deputy Commissioner for UI, UI Director and the Chief of Benefits will meet monthly to review the agency's performance in this area and discuss any changes in business operations that may be necessary. These operation meetings will continue until ALP is achieved.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Weekly operations meetings occur.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Weekly meetings continue to take place including discussions involving Core Measures.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Weekly meetings continue to take place where performance Core Measures are discussed and reviewed. First Payment promptness has significantly improved and will continue to do so.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Core Measures continue to be presented and discussed during weekly operations meetings. First Pay Promptness has experienced an increase during this reporting quarter.

Nonmonetary Determination Quality

State: Virginia

Federal Fiscal Year 2023-2024

CAP Based on 04/01/2021 - 03/31/2022 Performance of 31.45%.

Performance Measures for Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations ALP $\geq$ 75%.

	12/31/2022 Q1 9/30/2023 Q4	3/31/2023 Q2	6/30/2023 Q3	
Target	32.0%	45.0%	55.0%	65.0%
Actual	40.9%	51.0%	59.2%	51.0%

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

Insufficient dedicated training staff and vetted resources prior to the pandemic was further compounded by rapid hiring and pausing a certification based comprehensive formal training process, in the interest of addressing the historic numbers of claims during the past two years. Over reliance on formal audit results each quarter with insufficient quality spot checking on a regular basis may have led to a slower reactive capacity for management to address mistakes or grasp the scale of them.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

Additional training through a comprehensive and stage gate based approach will both bring newer employees up to speed and exceed the effectiveness of prior certification procedures. That increased effectiveness will come from utilizing learning style assessments, baseline initial knowledge assessment quizzes, and breaking training into stage gated modules rather than an all or nothing pass/fail at the conclusion of months of training. Additionally, the training materials and operation resources are being consolidated and vetted by a combination of training staff and adjudication leadership, while also further enhanced by DOL and NASWA training items where possible. Finally, better equipping the agency to quality spot check more frequently between the official BTQ audits will allow a more agile course correction for the department and/or coaching up for individual outliers. Those deputy senior positions will undergo audit training to further enhance their skillsets and effectiveness. Those positions will also contribute to the comprehensive training program to reinforce the path to meeting quality audit standards in a preventative fashion as a natural complement to their reactive spot checking function.

C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

n/a

Alternate Year Plan Updates

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

The new training plan and each employee's learning journey through the stage gated modules will be tracked via spreadsheet. The enhanced training of the deputy senior positions can also be easily tracked with milestone entries below. The training material

consolidation and vetting is easily tracked by spreadsheet.

Milestones

1. Consolidate all training materials into one digital location and systematically review.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The VEC has created a network folder to house all training materials, next steps will be to make it more user friendly.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

All Training Department training materials including PowerPoint presentations, recorded sessions, and Standard Operating Procedures have been separated and placed into a folder by issue type or topic.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This is complete. All training department materials have been placed in a central location and are regularly reviewed.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This milestone is complete. The training department materials remain accessible and are reviewed by staff whenever necessary.

2. Onboard and fully train 2 positions per adjudication center to act as quality spot check auditors who also aid in certification training and coaching up for found deficiencies.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

Deputy Seniors have been hired and went through initial training in Oct/Nov.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

The Senior Hearing Officers have been assigned to specific Hearing Officer Trainees and have conducted quality reviews of their determinations. Additionally, they have reviewed sample determinations from the entirety of Adjudication deputies to examine the accuracy of Issue Detection Dates.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Senior Hearing Officers conducted one-on-one mentoring sessions with trainee adjudicators in each Adjudication Center to directly address and assist with specific

adjudication processes and issue types particular to that trainee.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Senior Hearing Officers continue to conduct mentoring sessions with trainee adjudicators in order to help identify and correct any adjudication quality or UI process deficiencies specific to that trainee.

3. Review and incorporate DOL and NASWA training resources/materials into the VEC adjudication training process.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The training manager has identified: This is UI, UI Agency Tour, Fact-Finding and Adjudication (NIA FF), UI Operations Integrity Certificate (NIA 1).

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

Refresher training sessions on reasonable attempts and proper documentation of fact-finding which were developed from the 301 Handbook were conducted on multiple occasions.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

This is complete. Continued training sessions are being regularly conducted for Adjudication staff as topical deficiencies are identified by management using DOL materials.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

This milestone is complete. However continued training sessions are conducted for staff as necessary utilizing established DOL materials.

4. Place all deputies hired after February 2020 through a comprehensive formal training series, develop better ongoing/operations guidance practices.

FY 2023 Quarter 1 Status Report (Quarter Ending 12/31/2022):

The first group commenced classes November 2022.

FY 2023 Quarter 2 Status Report (Quarter Ending 3/31/2023):

To maximize efficiency and promote successful training initiatives the just in time training approach has been utilized. Specific milestones achieved include the first group of Hearing Officer Trainees completing the comprehensive instructional

training period with a portion of the class further progressing through the certification process.

FY 2023 Quarter 3 status report (Quarter Ending 6/30/2023):

Additional groups of trainee adjudicators were placed in a no review period and a sample of their written determinations have received BTQ scores from Adjudication management resulting in 6 newly certified adjudicators within the quarter.

FY 2023 Quarter 4 Status Report (Quarter Ending 9/30/2023):

Additional groups of trainee adjudicators were placed in a no review period and a sample of their written determinations have received BTQ scores from Adjudication management resulting in 11 newly certified adjudicators within the quarter.

5. UI PROGRAM INTEGRITY ACTION PLAN (UI IAP)

The UI IAP outlines the strategies the State will undertake during the planning period regarding the prevention reduction and recovery of UI improper payments. Disclosure of items deemed detrimental or sensitive to agency operations have been removed.

Virginia – Fiscal Year (FY) 2024

Accountable Agency Official(s).

List the person or persons accountable for ensuring integrity in the state's unemployment insurance (UI) program.

Name: Susan Landis

Title: Unemployment Insurance Director

Email: Susan.Landis@vec.virginia.gov

Phone: (804) 786-0873

***Note:** Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 09-23, issued on June 30, 2023, makes reference to UIPL No. 22-21, Change 2, throughout the guidance. However, on July 13, 2023, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) issued UIPL No. 10-23, which rescinded UIPL No. 22-21, Change 2. UIPL No. 11-23, also issued on July 13, 2023, changed the amount of the integrity grant funding originally issued under UIPL No. 22-21, Change 2, but maintained the guidance on required and recommended fraud prevention and detection and overpayment recovery activities.

- **(Topic #1: National Priority) – Ensuring UI program integrity by assessing and evaluating fraud risks, implementing, and maintaining sufficient controls to**

effectively mitigate the likelihood and impact of fraud, and reducing improper payments.

- In evaluating fraud risks, states should consider both eligibility fraud risks and identity (ID) fraud risks.

For identity fraud risks, the agency is taking specific measures to further strengthen application controls and improve identity verification processes.

- **State plans to evaluate UI fraud risks and implement and maintain sufficient controls to effectively prevent fraud and reduce improper payments, including state actions to develop their own state-specific antifraud strategy.**

- Key elements of an antifraud strategy include:
 - **Who** is responsible for fraud risk management activities?
 - Establish roles and responsibilities of those involved in fraud risk management activities, such as the antifraud entity and external parties responsible for fraud controls and communicate the role of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate potential fraud.
 - **What** is the program doing to manage fraud risk?
 - Describe the program's activities for preventing, detecting, and responding to fraud, as well as monitoring and evaluation.
 - **When** is the program implementing fraud risk management activities?
 - Create timelines for implementing fraud risk management activities, as appropriate, including monitoring and evaluations.
 - **Where** is the program focusing its fraud risk management activities?
 - Demonstrate links to the highest internal and external residual fraud risks outlined in the fraud risk profile.
 - **Why** is fraud risk management important?
 - Communicate the antifraud strategy to employees and other stakeholders, and link antifraud efforts to other risk management activities, if any.
- See A Framework for Managing Fraud Risks in Federal Programs at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-15-593sp.pdf> for additional information.

The Chief of Integrity and Compliance and the Benefit Payment Control (BPC) Manager are the primary staff responsible for fraud risk management activities for the VEC. They are supported by their BPC staff and Fraud Specialists, the Unemployment Insurance Director, the Information Security Officer, and other Information Technology staff. Customer-facing staff also play an important role in detecting and reporting suspected UI fraud.

All agency staff are responsible for remaining vigilant in detecting potentially fraudulent activity. However, certain roles are required to take more direct

measures. The UI Director oversees the UI Program to include any fraud detection measures. The Chief of Integrity and Compliance oversees the Benefit Payment Control Unit, the UI Training Department, and the Federal Monitoring Program. The Benefit Payment Control Unit Manager and staff of fraud investigators and support personnel are responsible for investigating potentially fraudulent claims (for example, via crossmatches or other reporting) and establishing overpayments. The UI Fraud Analyst is responsible for providing technical monitoring and support of system-based fraud prevention and detection measures.

- **State use of tools, services, strategies, process improvements, and/or procedural changes adopted by the state to combat fraud, verify identities, and enhance recovery efforts. States must identify which tools, solutions, and service provider(s) are used in the state's fraud management operations, including but not limited, to the following areas: data analysis, risk-based ID verification, fraud prevention and detection, and cybersecurity.**
 - Include strategies, solutions, and/or activities using funds the Department has made available to states for combating fraud and strengthening UI program integrity under UIPL Nos. 28-20: 28-20, Change 1: 28-20, Change 2: 28-20, Change 4: 22-21: 11-23: and 02-22.
 - Provide details on overpayment recovery efforts including:
 - Actions with banks, financial institutions, and with Federal law enforcement's forfeiture and seizure efforts.
 - Information on how the state is using waivers of recovery of overpayments both for regular UI and temporary UC programs created by the CARES Act, including if the state is using approved blanket waivers as described in UIPL No. 20-21, Change 1.
 - How the state is using the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) for benefit overpayment recovery, how the state is ensuring covered debts are being submitted, and any barriers/challenges in working with TOP.

The VEC has assisted with both state and federal authorities in prosecuting UI fraud. For state prosecutions, the agency works with the Office of Attorney General resulting in a total of 34 indictments, with 23 current convictions and total restitution of \$269,003. The ongoing work includes roughly 70 cases pending further investigation. For federal prosecutions, VEC has assisted the DOL OIG with 119 cases and 97 convictions and \$12.5 million ordered in restitution. Two fraud investigators have been recognized by US DOL OIG for their outstanding work relating to Operation Checkmate with the Department of Corrections.

The state has waived \$81,289,826 in state overpayments and \$177,657,327 in federal overpayments for a total of \$258,947,153. Each claimant who receives an overpayment also receives a waiver application if their claim was between March 2020 and June 2022. Virginia has processed over 101,818 applications and will continue to process waivers for the applicable timeframe and any resulting decisions from appeals.

- **State strategies designed to facilitate claimants' compliance with state work search requirements while also supporting their reemployment such as adoption of the work search requirements in the Model Work Search Legislation (see TEN No. 17-19).**

- Outline the state's work search requirement and explain state challenges with work search improper payments.
- Discuss the state's plan to improve work search compliance by reducing work search errors and strengthening reemployment.

Virginia Unemployment Compensation Act meets all the requirements outlined in DOL's Model Work Search legislation. The requirement that a claimant be able and available and actively seeking work is required in the Virginia Code at 60.2-612 (7)a, and states: He is able to work, is available for work, and is actively seeking and unable to obtain suitable work. Every claimant who is totally unemployed shall report to the Commission the names of employers contacted each week in his effort to obtain work. This information may be subject to employer verification by the Commission through a program designed for that purpose.

The VEC believes that the Virginia Code sufficiently covers the intent of the federal recommendation to define what it means to be actively seeking work, but it could be amended to include changing how many job contacts or what job search activities can substitute for a job contact. The VEC's relevant definitions found in its Code of Regulations and General Rules 16 VAC 5-10-10 could also be amended to define job search and job activities.

The current law and practice require each claimant to conduct two job contacts a week. The VEC believes it should receive the recommendation of its state Commission on Unemployment Compensation if job contacts can be substituted with job search activities provided by the DOL legislation.

The recommendation that claimants must receive notification of the requirement to be actively seeking work. The Virginia Code covers the requirement that claimants must be registered for work in 60.2- 615(5.). All claimants receive in writing to keep their claim active that they must be registered for job service and actively searching for work. This requirement is also outlined in the Benefits Rights and Responsibilities document that all claimants receive. The VEC does not have any recommendations on amending the Virginia Code as this requirement is already met.

Virginia wants to Improve work search verification through continued work of its RESEA program. Virginia views the RESEA program as a lynchpin between UI and WIOA. The RESEA program will be emphasized as the vehicle to achieve this goal. This collaborative effort would build off the “My Reemployment Plan” tools. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program identifies claimants exiting the military (UCX claimants) and claimants determined by the WPRS model as “most likely to exhaust.” This early intervention strategy identifies eligible claimants within the first five weeks of their claim and schedules them for an initial RESEA session by the seventh week of their claim.

- **(Topic #2) – State plans and actions to address the state's top three improper payment root causes in Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) 2022.**

- Identify the state’s top three improper payment root causes.
- Explain the state’s challenges in reducing improper payments in the top three root cause categories.
- Discuss the state’s plan to reduce improper payments in each root cause category.

Top three causes for Overpayments are unreported Eligibility Issues Excluding Work Search, Work Search Issues (for example those detected through BAM), and unreported Separation Issues. For Separation Issues, the challenge has been obtaining prompt information from employers. However, through increased outreach and communication regarding the requirement for employers to respond electronically this should be alleviated. The agency continues its work on modifying all communications to ensure that plain language is used so that claimants are better able to understand eligibility and reporting requirements.

- **(Topic #3) – State coordination and collaboration with the DOL-OIG and other state and Federal law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute UI fraud and recover overpayments. This should also include state plans to continue providing all confidential UC information to DOL-OIG for purposes of both investigating fraud and performing audits.**

The VEC has been working in close coordination with the DOL-OIG since early July 2020 to identify claims that merit further investigation and potential prosecution. The agency has worked closely with DOL-OIG, DHS, FBI, IRS Criminal Investigations, US Secret Service and US Postal Inspectors to provide documentation to support further investigative activities and prosecution. Along with federal agencies the VEC has worked with the Virginia State Police, the VA Attorney General’s Office and the

Office of the State's Inspector General as well as local law enforcement agencies to investigate individual and small ring cases that have a nexus to their jurisdictions.

- **(Topic #4) – State plans to strengthen program integrity in UI tax operations, including current activities and plans to identify and prevent worker misclassification, State Unemployment Tax Act (SUTA) Dumping, and fictitious employer schemes, and development/use of effective employer audit strategies (i.e., use of remote audits).**
 - Identify current activities and plans to address:
 - Worker Misclassification
 - SUTA Dumping
 - Fictitious employer schemes
 - Development/use of effective employer audit strategies (including, but not limited to, use of remote audits).

Identify current activities and plans to address:

Worker Misclassification: VEC Tax will use 1099 data received from the IRS to investigate working industries with common practices of worker misclassification.

SUTA Dumping: VEC TAX is currently working with IT to load data into the SUTA Dumping software. Once data is successfully loaded, staff will begin to run queries to identify cases for possible SUTA dumping violations.

Fictitious employer schemes: Discussions have started to use LexisNexis platform to identify possible fictitious employers during the online registration process.

Development/use of effective employer audit strategies (including, but not limited to, use of remote audits): VEC Tax plans to use the BOX tool to implement the full process of remote audits.

- **(Topic #5) – State plans and actions to strengthen internal security and ensure that all appropriate internal controls and processes are in place and are adequate to assess internal risks and threats, ensure program integrity, and minimize program vulnerabilities (see UIPL No. 14-17)**

The Virginia Employment Commission's (VEC) Information Technology Division (IT) and Information Security Division (ISO) use a range of policies and procedures to strengthen and meet both state and federal requirements for internal security. The VEC's Information Security Policies and Procedures ensure that internal controls and processes are in place to assess internal risks and threats, ensure program integrity, and minimize program vulnerabilities.

-
- **(Topic #6) – State plans and actions to evaluate the effectiveness and equity of fraud prevention and detection, ID verification, and improper payment reduction activities. State should include strategies to ensure that processes used to detect and prevent fraud are effective and do not limit the ability for a legitimate claimant to apply for and become eligible for UC. States implementing or using facial recognition technology in their ID proofing processes must also report findings from bias testing and provide updates on efforts to mitigate biases or barriers in this section of the IAP.**

- Identify potential barriers that are created by fraud prevention and detection functions for legitimate claimants. Provide plans and actions designed to mitigate such risks.
- As required in UIPL No. 11-23, states must ensure there is at least one timely, effective, and accessible non-digital alternative to online ID verification, which should not be overly burdensome on applicants, limit access to public benefits programs or the timely receipt of benefits, or stigmatize members of the public in any way. Provide details on the state's non-digital ID verification option(s).
- Include how the state flags cases for suspected fraudulent activity and how investigation resources are assigned, including:
 - What risk scoring elements and/or prioritization elements are used.
 - How the risk scoring elements and/or prioritization elements are weighted.
 - How the state evaluates the weights based on false positives and negatives.
 - How risk scoring elements and/or prioritization elements are updated.
 - How the state ensures the fraud risk scoring and/or prioritization of cases does not negatively affect legitimate claimants.
- Include details on how the state measures claimants' usage of both digital and non-digital identity verification options, how the state reviews digital services for false positive and false negatives, and how the state ensures legitimate claimants have alternative paths to prove their identity and/or resolve issues, including providing a possible recourse.

Individuals who are not able to use online services, may file their claim or receive services by calling the customer contact center. Customers who are flagged as having a possible identity issue may verify their identity through mail or visiting a local Virginia Career Works center. These customers also have the option to verify their identity through ID.me but ID.me is not required.

We closely monitor all reports of true individuals who are blocked from using on-line services due to identity security measures. Business and IT staff review the reasons(s) why the individual may have been blocked and use this analysis to implement changes where necessary to security features in order to maximize the acceptance of true users while remaining vigilant against fraudulent actors.

For an accessible non-digital alternative to online verification, claims are taken at the customer contact center where customer service representatives use an identity quiz (tool created through identity verification vendor) Through identity vendor, identity quiz is administered to verify identity. Claims that are taken at the call center are still tested against IDH.

- **(Topic #7) – State plans and actions to mitigate negative consequences for victims of UI ID fraud, including ensuring simplified processes to remove the victim’s liability for overpayments resulting from ID fraud.**
 - Include details regarding how the state provides a reporting mechanism for UI ID fraud on their websites, communicates status updates for such investigations, and takes action to protect the victim when the state determines that UI ID fraud has occurred (*see UIPL No. 11-23* for more details on protecting victims of ID fraud).
 - Include the state’s procedures for mitigating negative impacts on the UI ID fraud victim (*e.g.*, establishing a pseudo claim record, temporarily marking the overpayment as “uncollectible”, etc.).

The VEC allows for fraud to be reported through its website through a fillable form that allows either the claimant, employer or staff make a report. The webpage explains “what to expect” when identity fraud occurs, and a link to the Office of Attorney General’s webpage for identity theft. The VEC only pays for fraud monitoring if the agency has determined a breach or loss of information has occurred from its system.

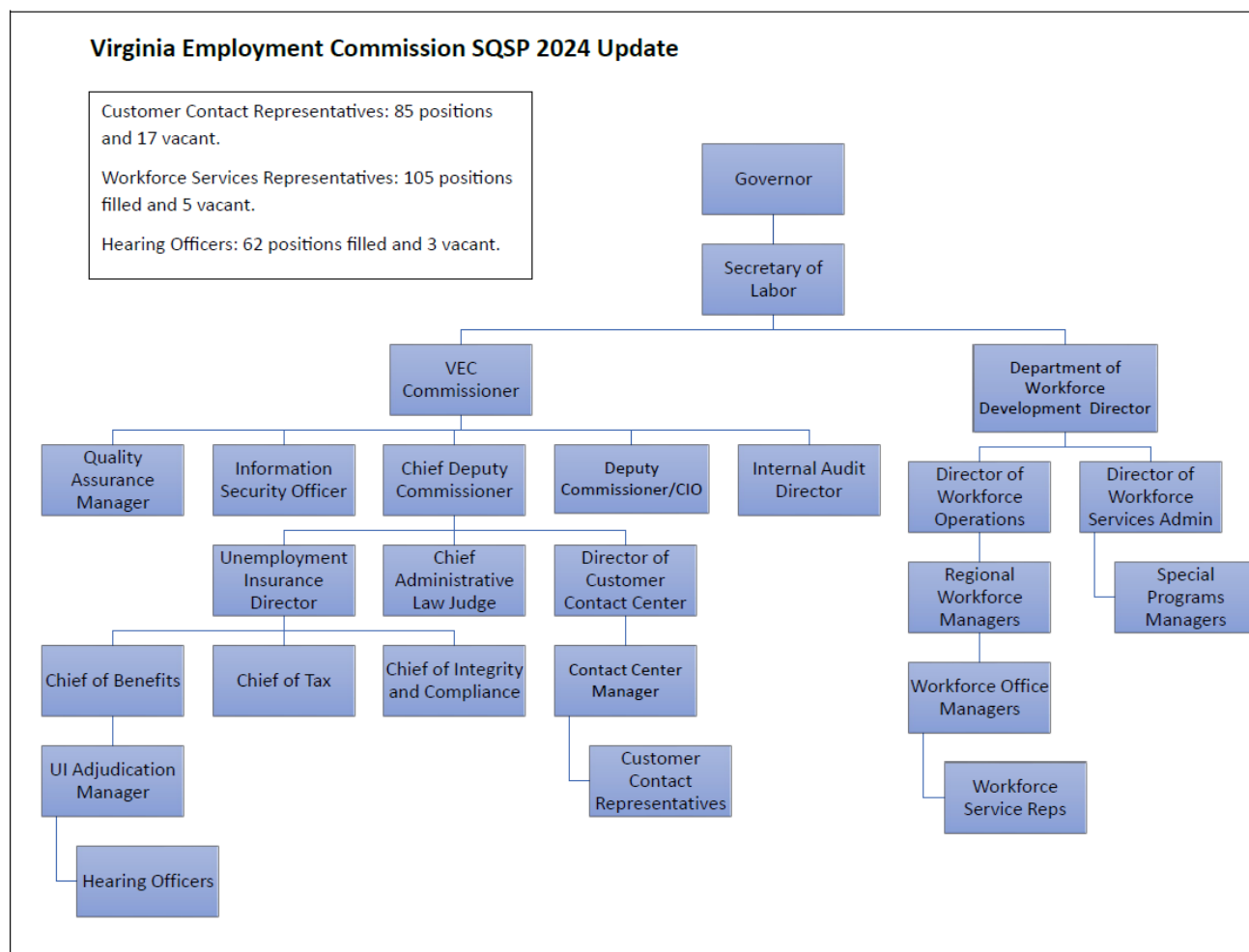
- **(Topic #8) – If the state has not provided complete and accurate overpayment reporting on the ETA 227 reports (Overpayment Detection and Recovery Activities), and the ETA 902P report (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Activities), the state must provide information on plans for improvement, including timeframes and milestones, for addressing the issue and ensuring complete, accurate, and timely reporting in FY 2024.**
 - If the state has submitted all data for the ETA 227 or 902P reports, this section is not applicable, and the state can input “N/A”.

N/A Virginia has submitted both ETA 227 and ETA 902P reports.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The organization chart must conform to the requirement for delivery of service through public employment offices, or such other designated providers as the Secretary may

authorize; show the State's configuration from the Governor of the State down to the point of Employment Service and UI customer service delivery; and provide sufficient detail to show each organizational unit involved and the title of the unit manager.



Organization Chart is maintained within the Virginia Employment Commission and the USDOL Region II Office.

7. SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

The State administrator must sign and date the SQSP Signature Page. By signing the Signature Page, the State administrator certifies that the State will comply with all the assurances and activities contained in the SQSP guidelines.

Though a State needs to submit the complete SQSP package on a 2-year cycle, there are certain documents contained in the SQSP package which are required to be submitted by States annually as part of the off-year submission. The documents which are required to be submitted annually are considered a modification to the complete SQSP submitted the

previous year. Since funds for State UI operations are appropriated each year, each State is required to annually submit the transmittal letter, budget worksheets, organizational chart and the signature page. The modification may also include CAPs for new identified performance deficiencies, and any required modifications to existing CAPs.

Since the UI program is a required one-stop partner, States have the option of including UI in the Combined State Plan authorized by WIOA sec. 103.

**U.S. Department of Labor
SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE**

OMB Control No.: 1205-0132		Expiration Date: 02/29/2024
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration	FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2024	STATE VA
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE		
This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and Virginia Employment Commission (NAME OF STATE AGENCY) The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the State's overall operating plan and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL, and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds. All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms.		
TYPED NAME AND TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
Demetrios J. Melis STATE ADMINISTRATOR (print name)	Demetrios J. Melis Digitally signed by Demetrios J. Melis Date: 2023.11.20 12:55:51 -05'00'	11/20/2023
Jennifer Friedman DOL – REGIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name)	JENNIFER FRIEDMAN Digitally signed by JENNIFER FRIEDMAN Date: 2023.11.22 10:14:04 -05'00'	11/22/2023
DOL – NATIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name) (if required)		

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2024

STATE VA

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE

This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and Virginia Employment Commission.

The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the Commonwealth's overall operating plan and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL, and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds.

All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms.

TYPED NAME AND TITLE

STATE ADMINISTRATOR Demetrios J. Melis

SIGNATURE Demetrios J. Melis

DATE 11/20/23

DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL Jennifer Friedman

SIGNATURE Jennifer Friedman

DATE 11/22/2023

b. Requirements for States electing to include UI in the Combined State Plan

States that elect to include UI in the Combined State Plan must:

1. Submit an SQSP in the following manner depending on their timing in the SQSP cycle:

A. IF A STATE IS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THEIR 2-YEAR CYCLE, THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE MOST RECENTLY APPROVED COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE. A COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE WILL INCLUDE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER, BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS, STATE PLAN NARRATIVE, CAPS (INCLUDING THE MILESTONES AND THE COMPLETION DATE FOR EACH MILESTONE), THE UI IAP, ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, AND THE SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE. ONE OF THE KEY GOALS FOR THE UI PROGRAM IS TO ENSURE THAT CLAIMANTS ARE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY RETURN TO WORK. AS SUCH, THE SQSP STATE PLAN NARRATIVE MUST PROVIDE A DISCUSSION OF THE PLAN COORDINATION WITH OTHER WIOA COMBINED PLAN PROGRAMS TO ENSURE A COORDINATED EFFORT AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY.

B. IF A STATE IS IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE 2-YEAR CYCLE, THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE MOST RECENTLY APPROVED COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE WITH A MODIFICATION THAT MUST INCLUDE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER, BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS, ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, AND THE SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE. THE MODIFICATION MAY ALSO INCLUDE CAPS FOR NEW IDENTIFIED PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCIES, AND ANY REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING CAPS. THE CAP MUST LIST BOTH SPECIFIC MILESTONES FOR KEY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS OR IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES, AND THE COMPLETION DATE FOR EACH MILESTONE.

2. Submit the required off-year SQSP components as a modification to the Combined State Plan on the same cycle as the regular SQSP process which must be approved by September 30th each year

Senior Community Service Employment Program

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

A. ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D))(MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

The population and the workforce in the United States is aging, as is the population in Virginia. The Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey estimates for Virginia show that 26.63% of Virginia's population is age 55 or older. The second largest population group, age 35-54, will be entering the 55 and up category in the next twenty years. Programs that serve the aging population in Virginia are essential. Labor force programs also must be taking this age group into consideration, as people 55 and up will be making up a large segment of the labor force for at least the next twenty years.

U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Virginia		
		% of Population
Total Population	8,683,619	
Age 0-14	1,533,350	17.66%
Age 15-19	569,202	6.55%
Age 20-34	1,758,907	20.26%
Age 35-54	2,249,090	25.90%
Age 55+	2,573,070	29.63%

To identify long-term projections for occupations in the Commonwealth of Virginia, data was pulled from the Virginia Employment Commission's Labor Market Information site. This data can be found <https://virginiaworks.com/Occupational-Projections>. The top twenty-five occupations are listed below, as well as the base year and projected employment.

Long-Term Occupational Virginia 2020-2030 Projections				
	Occupation	Base Year Employment	Projected Employment	Projected Difference
1	Office and Administrative Support	466,973	467,437	464
2	Sales and Related	391,851	399,021	7,170
3	Business and Financial Operations	326,329	359,786	33,457
4	Transportation and Material Moving	314,562	360,400	45,838
5	Food Prep and Serving	277,827	334,150	56,323
6	Computer and Mathematics	245,652	287,041	41,389

7	Management	231,001	254,857	23,856
8	Education, Training and Library	230,558	260,480	29,922
9	Business Operations Specialist	230,498	255,351	24,853
10	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Operations	220,171	247,347	27,176
11	Retail Sales	214,087	214,790	703
12	Construction and Extraction	193,847	211,921	18,074
13	Production	172,512	183,516	11,004
14	Food and Beverage Serving	163,744	193,168	29,424
15	Material Moving	158,379	181,936	23,557
16	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	158,114	172,750	14,636
17	Information and Record Clerks	147,695	152,834	5,139
18	Healthcare Support	145,105	176,131	31,026
19	Construction Trades	142,296	156,654	14,358
20	Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners	140,533	158,208	17,675
21	Building, Grounds Clearing and Maintenance	136,964	146,344	9,380
22	Motor Vehicle Operators	118,736	136,240	17,504
23	Preschool, Primary, Secondary and Special Education School	108,228	121,188	12,960
24	Cashiers	100,935	96,027	-4,908
25	Protective Services	100,081	108,901	8,820
25	Other Management	97,235	106,417	9,182

There is no one type of job or occupation that is most suitable for older workers. Many factors must be considered, including physical ability, work history, education levels, transportation access, and the interests and needs of the individual. Older workers are diverse in their abilities and needs. Many SCSEP participants have significant barriers to employment. In reviewing the long-term occupational projections with older workers in mind, several categories stand out as potential good fits. These include:

- Office and Administrative Support
- Transportation
- Health Care Practitioners, Support, and Technical Assistance
- Education, Training and Library Services
- Food Preparation

- Retail and Other Sales

Occupations that require high levels of education and training or heavy physical labor may not be suitable for older adults seeking part-time employment but are considered and discussed with participants if they show an interest in those occupations.

Grantees and sub-grantees work to identify both host agency placements and outside courses that will train SCSEP participants in high growth areas. Sub-grantees seek out non-profit and government agencies who provide in-demand services. This allows participants to be trained in areas where there is already a local need for trained employees. This is particularly useful in rural areas that have limited options for outside training and courses. Grantees and sub-grantees depend on host agencies to provide relevant training and job search assistance to participants.

Sub-grantees also consider barriers to employment when assigning participants to host agencies and recommending outside training. For instance, having a criminal record is a major barrier to gaining employment. Sub-grantee coordinators have noted that transportation jobs will often consider hiring those with a criminal background and may assist participants with obtaining their Commercial Drivers' License (CDL). Transportation and material moving is number four (4) on Virginia's list of occupations, and positions available are projected to grow in the next decade by 45,000.

On the Job Experience (OJE) is a useful tool, particularly in rural areas that may be harder hit by economic downturns, in comparison with urban areas. Some of Virginia's rural areas have been designated by the U.S. Department of Labor as areas of persistent unemployment, and many others are close to that threshold. In some instances, SCSEP participants have an Individual Employment Plan with an employment goal that requires skills that cannot be obtained through regular community service assignments. Coordinators determine if those skills align with available jobs in the area (cashiering, customer service, retail) and then try to make a connection with a private employer.

Health care support, diagnostics, and administrative jobs are also projected to be a large part of Virginia's economy in the next ten years. SCSEP participants have trained as home health aides, and sub-grantees provide information about Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training when appropriate. Participants have also completed food service safety certifications, customer service certifications, and computer courses that will help them find employment outside of the program.

One major barrier for SCSEP participants is digital literacy. Many older individuals are not trained in basic computer skills, and those are a major component to nearly every job available today. In many cases it is essential to be able to apply for a job online, to have a working email address, and to understand basic computer skills and applications. The state SCSEP grant was offered a demonstration grant in 2020 from the U.S. Department of Labor to address an unmet need for the SCSEP population. After consulting SCSEP sub-grantee coordinators and workforce partners, DARS developed a digital literacy program using the Northstar Digital Literacy program. Participants met in small groups with peers in courses that taught computer basics at their pace. This program was essential in improving computer skills and increasing confidence in participants. This program will end in December 2023, but DARS has applied and received an Additional Training and Supportive Services waiver to continue these classes for SCSEP participants.

Assessment

The assessment process is essential in developing a training plan and an Individual Employment Plan that not only suits the participant's needs but aligns their needs and goals with an occupational area that is growing. Sub-grantees use several tools to complete assessments, including self-assessments, staff assessments, interviews, and sites that identify occupational needs in the coverage area, such as ONEnet.com and the Virginia Employment Commission's Labor Market Information and community profiles. Coordinators use the assessment process to identify the goals and needs of the participant and use long term employment projections to find a host agency and/or outside training opportunities that will increase the participant's likelihood to find unsubsidized employment.

Individual Employment Plan

Following an in-depth assessment, an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is developed for each SCSEP participant. The IEP serves as a roadmap with established goals and measurable action steps. The IEP is an agreed-upon plan between the participant and grantee or sub-grantee, which outlines the occupational preferences and training needed by the participant. A set of established goals with timelines are determined for training; barriers to employment are addressed and supportive service needs are identified. This information helps determine an appropriate community service training position with a host agency where the participant gains work experience and develops or improves skills. Along with the work experience gained through the community service assignment at a host agency, the participant may also take advantage of specific skills training. These may include basic computer skills, customer service certification, specific licensing courses, and/or adult education courses. The assessment and IEP, coupled with knowledge of the local labor market, form the

basis for determining training and types of skill training to be provided, and how the training increase the participant's chances of finding employment.

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

SCSEP is a required partner under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and partners with programs under the act to best serve participants. This is the first year that Virginia's SCSEP is included in the Combined State Plan-in the past, SCSEP has issued a stand-alone state plan. This inclusion will increase the visibility of the program in the state.

Virginia has also established the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement to consolidate workforce programs and omit redundancy. SCSEP is included under this umbrella with other workforce programs discussed in this state plan document.

A. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))

SCSEP sub-grantees have Memoranda of Understanding with their local American Job Centers (one-stop) and co-enroll participants when possible. Some sub-grantees have noted that the local one-stops cater more towards those looking for full-time work. Given that most SCSEP applicants and participants are interested in part-time work, their options at the one-stop may be limited. Some participants may not live within a reasonable travel distance of a one-stop. Participants are educated on the availability of comprehensive workforce development-related activities provided at the one-stops, including updating resumes, practicing interview skills, and job search and placement services. The local one-stops refer potential SCSEP applicants to the local offices. If feasible, SCSEP staff or participants work or train out of the local one-stops, although this may be on a part-time basis. SCSEP coordinators with large coverage areas often devote certain days of the week or month to traveling to one-stops in their coverage area to meet with applicants and participants.

DARS, the state grantee, will continue to represent SCSEP in state level ONE-STOP meetings and initiatives. The DARS SCSEP director works with the workforce development team at DARS to ensure that representatives are aware of the program, and that older workers are part of the overall workforce strategy. The DARS SCSEP director attends meetings and trainings and provides information to

ONE-STOP representatives and workforce initiatives to ensure that SCSEP has an active role.

The DARS workforce team has worked with the DARS SCSEP director to ensure that SCSEP is included in the combined state plan. Prior to this year, SCSEP submitted a stand-alone state plan. This will increase SCSEP visibility and allow increased networking with other workforce partners.

B. Planned actions to coordinate of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))

The state sponsored grant has eight sub-grantees; seven of these are Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). In those cases, coordination with other programs under the Older Americans Act (OAA) is fairly simple, as there are other program managers on site. In other cases, referrals are made to the local AAA, and SCSEP coordinators must be made aware of OAA programs. The OAA authorizes nutrition aid, insurance counseling, weatherization assistance, legal services and elder abuse protection, and caregiver support, among others. SCSEP participants meet the criteria for many of these programs. During the initial and ongoing assessment process, SCSEP coordinators determine what other aging services a participant may need. Often other OAA programs provide essential supportive services and help the participant gain stability that, in turn, helps the participant find and retain unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP coordinators who are not placed in a local AAA provide information and support to local AAAs and other senior service agencies. All AAAs in Virginia are made aware of the SCSEP, and referrals from other aging service programs are encouraged.

C. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))

Strong community networks are essential to the success of SCSEP. Grantees and sub-grantees work to develop connections in local communities to both recruit participants, and to find services and host agencies that other public and private entities may provide. Sub-grantees partner with local and state government offices that serve the older population, housing programs, churches, food banks, veterans' services programs, DARS and disability service programs, and health care organizations to identify needs in the community, and to reach out to potential participants and host agencies.

Grantees and sub-grantees participate in meetings, both on a state and local level, as appropriate, with senior service providers. These include both public and private

entities. SCSEP partners coordinate with these programs to serve our participants more effectively and efficiently. The recent push for “person-centered” case coordination has shown that to address one challenge an older person may be having, providers need to coordinate and ensure all the person’s needs are being met. That may include housing, health care, mental health or substance abuse counseling, transportation, and continuing education or training.

SCSEP providers do focus on the Most in Need factors when partnering with public and private entities. SCSEP providers are tasked to provide priority services to those who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Veteran, or qualifying spouse of veteran
- 65 years old or older
- Has a disability
- Homeless, or at risk for homelessness
- Limited English proficiency
- Low literacy
- Lives in a rural area
- Lives in an area designated as having persistent unemployment
- Frail
- Low employment prospects

Recruitment efforts and partnerships are planned around that list of criteria. For instance, a sub-grantee may partner with a local homeless shelter to identify potential participants receiving services. Sub-grantees work with partners in vocational rehabilitation programs to offer services to people with disabilities who meet SCSEP’s eligibility criteria. Partnerships are established with local veterans’ groups and agencies that provide services to veterans to recruit that population. Public and private partnerships are made with the most in need factors in mind. Cross-referral methods are also established, so that providers can connect individuals with all the services they may need.

Grantees and sub-grantees will continue to coordinate with local, state, and federal transportation providers to assess need and to develop solutions for transportation issues. This is a challenge that every locality has, but solutions are minimal in rural areas.

Use of 211 Virginia (the Commonwealth’s 24-hour information and referral service) and other directories identify entities and programs in the community that provide referrals and support services for seniors. These directories are especially helpful for transition services, when a participant’s durational limit is approaching, and project staff are working with the individual to develop a transition assessment and IEP.

Grantees and sub-grantees will continue to network with local faith-based

organizations to conduct outreach to SCSEP-eligible individuals, and to connect participants with services that these organizations may provide.

Grantees and sub-grantees have had success establishing partnerships with local community colleges. Often workforce offices are in the community colleges, which is convenient for participants looking into workforce programs, and for those who are interested in continuing education. Community colleges have been an invaluable partner for adult education, particularly in developing computer training for seniors. Adult education centers also provide GED training and testing, which many participants need. Even entry-level jobs often require, at minimum, a high school diploma or GED.

The state program was offered a demonstration grant in 2020 and chose to focus on digital literacy courses designed specifically for older adults. Computer skills are essential in today's labor force; even applying for jobs generally takes place on websites. Older adults who do not have basic digital literacy skills are at a clear disadvantage when seeking employment. Sub-grantees have noted that "beginner" level computer classes at community colleges or other entities often assume a basic level of knowledge that many participants do not have. Sub-grantees that participated with this demonstration grant partnered with adult education partners, community colleges, and library partners to provide courses based on the Northstar Digital Literacy platform. Classes were kept small so that instructors could provide needed hands-on support. The program was successful, with most participants reporting initial reticence to attend, but increased confidence and skills as the program continued. Although this program will end on December 31, 2023, DARS has incorporated this model into their Additional Training and Supportive Services waiver and has shared the model with national SCSEP grantees and other state SCSEP grantees.

Sub-grantees also partner with local medical providers to offer participants the annual physical exam benefit. Goodwill, Inc., was able to partner with Med Express to provide physicals at the same cost to the provider, regardless of location in the Commonwealth.

Grantees and sub-grantees are also working with re-entry groups who aid those leaving the prison system. Goodwill partners with Valleys Re-Entry program, and the state program partners with OAR. Sub-grantees have noted an increase in the number of employers who are willing to work with a participant who may have a criminal record, which is an encouraging development.

State and national grantees also utilize each other as active partners. Goodwill has developed considerable online resources for job seekers, and each grantee and sub-grantee has developed a network of partners. By sharing information and cross-referral, grantees ensure that they work together to best use resources, rather than compete for resources. This is particularly important in rural areas where there are

state and national slot overlap and limited resources and host agencies.

D. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))

Grantees review and provide sub-grantees with local labor market data available at the Virginia Employment Commission's Labor Market Information webpage. This information includes demographics, education level, employment level, and top employers in each Virginia locality. This helps the program identify and adjust training to respond to growth in occupations and industries.

Grantees have continued to work with other job training initiatives, including workforce development teams, on behalf of SCSEP and SCSEP participants, and will continue to seek opportunities to jointly serve SCSEP participants. The state grantee requested to be part of the WIOA Combined State Plan, and this is the first year that SCSEP has been included in the broader state plan. This will increase the visibility of SCSEP in the workforce arena.

Grantees and sub-grantees will continue to partner with labor organizations such as the Virginia Employment Commission, the Workforce Investment Boards, and local Chambers of Commerce to increase program visibility and to identify areas of need, training opportunities, and job opportunities in each locality.

Sub-grantees frequently identify and utilize other job training programs. Participants have been able to undergo specific certification training offered through other job training programs and receive certifications in food preparation and service, customer service, health care, administration, and commercial driver's licenses. These certifications are all tied to occupations that are in demand in Virginia and are projected to be in demand in the future.

E. Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

Grantees and sub-grantees have had varying levels of interaction and success in partnering with the one-stop system. All sub-grantees have Memoranda of Understanding with at least one local one-stop, and some sub-grantees have a part-time presence in a One-stop center. Sub-grantees have found that the infrastructure and cost share percentages for having a permanent office at a one-stop is generally not affordable. SCSEP sub-grantees will continue to work with One-stops to ensure that participants are aware of and avail themselves to all programs that they qualify for and that would assist them in becoming economically self-sufficient and to obtain unsubsidized employment. Sub-grantees will continue to refer participants

and ineligible SCSEP applicants to the one-stop for additional programs and services.

SCSEP participants are also frequently placed at a one-stop as a community service assignment. There they can receive job training as greeters, resource aids, job developers, custodians, clerical aides, and customer service representatives. As the participants learn about the one-stop's services and job search option, they have more support for their own training and job searches.

SCSEP participant openings will continue to be posted at the One-stop centers. Co-enrollment with WIOA programs, when possible, will be encouraged for participants seeking full-time employment.

Grantees will continue to encourage One-stop centers to include all SCSEP grantees operating in the local area in regular partner meetings to improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system.

Guidance will be requested by the One-stops on relevant skills required by local employers. This will impact participant assessments, goals, and IEPs.

When possible, grantees and sub-grantees will attend Workforce Investment Board meetings in their service areas.

F. Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Local SCSEP staff in rural areas work with economic development offices in their coverage areas. Staff ensure that local economic development offices understand the growing segment of the labor force that consists of older workers, and that in the next twenty years this is the only segment of the labor force that is growing. Local staff often sit on the boards of these organizations and attend board meetings to learn about new opportunities and to share information about the SCSEP.

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

While the state grantee and sub-grantees have established effective networks in the public sector, to the private sector should be a priority. In the past the state grantee has been able to rely on non-profit and government agencies for host agency partnerships and for the hiring of participants, but engaging with private employers opens other opportunities for participants. The state grantee and sub-grantees will be working to identify private employers in their area that can hire

older workers. We will identify skills and training needed for jobs available in each area, and partner with companies who are willing to work with our population.

Another method all SCSEP staff in Virginia will be considering in the next four years is identifying additional, targeted specialized training opportunities beyond the basic community service assignments. Targeted skills are essential for the success of SCSEP participants. Initially academic training may be necessary, to advance very basic skills, and later targeted skill-specific training identified in the IEP will be implemented later in the participant's enrollment. As the participant works with their host agency, coordinators should identify specific talents and abilities that will give participants an edge in the hiring process.

In the next four years, all grantees hope to increase the utilization of On-the-Job Experience, particularly in rural areas, where host agencies and employment opportunities are limited. It is essential to create partnerships with local businesses in these areas, and to help them understand the benefits to hiring older workers. DARS will provide local labor market information to sub-grantees so that they can narrow down lists of companies to contact, as coordinators may have a large geographical area to cover, and limited time to make those contacts. SCSEP participant staff will also be encouraged to make those contacts with local employers.

SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees will also engage with business development professionals in their regions. DARS has a business development team that is already providing support to the program, and NCOA and Goodwill have business development professionals on staff as well. Partnering with people who are familiar with the employers and the skill needs in a geographic area is essential, particularly with limited resources and time.

DARS SCSEP staff have attended new counselor training and business development team meetings as well as statewide aging, adult education and rehabilitative services council meetings and conferences to present information on the SCSEP. Most of these opportunities include public and private employers, and staff networks with private employers at these events.

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

The following data was pulled from the Senior Community Service Employment Program Preliminary Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals, PY 2021. The areas where minorities are significantly underserved are highlighted in yellow.

Minority Cat.	Pop. %	State	AARP Pop %	AARP	GW Pop %	Goodwill	NCOA Pop %	NCOA
Hispanic	2.3%	2.5%	3.8%	3.2%	2.00%	0.4%	10.8%	7.40%
Black	32.0%	58.4%	47.9%	88.8%	12.1%	38.0%	22.0%	47.9%
Asian	1.8%	0.6%	3.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%	12.8%	11.40%
American Indian	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	1.10%	0.40%	0.40%
Pacific Is.	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

AARP and the state grantee should focus on recruitment of the Asian population in their service areas, and Goodwill and NCOA should focus on recruitment of the Hispanic population in their coverage areas. These two populations present some challenges; there are some cultural differences that may prevent older individuals in these two populations from seeking employment assistance. There also may be language barriers, which grantees should assist in overcoming by hiring translators and/or referring applicants to English as a Second Language courses. Grantees will reach out to cultural centers and representatives of these populations to discuss how they may better be reached and served.

All grantees remain committed to providing the program in an equitable manner, and having diversity in the program that accurately reflects the diversity in the community served. Grantees and sub-grantees conduct outreach to minority populations in their communities.

All grantees serve participants who are English as a second language speakers. NCOA is fortunate to have bilingual staff members, and other grantees find translators and ESL classes in alternate locations. It has been noted that in the past few years, recruitment of immigrant community members, particularly Hispanic community members, has been difficult due to the policies regarding immigration and distrust of government agencies in those communities. People born outside of the United States are hesitant to approach government programs for support.

The following strategies will continue to be used to maximize recruitment of minorities to the program.

- Utilizing information and training on practices posted on the older worker web-based Community of Practice.
- Monitor the proportion of minority participants served and minority outcomes for SCSEP participants, keeping in mind local demographics.
- Build upon established links with service organizations that provide service to minority groups including continued contact with agencies and organizations in the community that serve Asian and Hispanic populations and making those organizations aware of SCSEP's recruitment goals and open slots.

- Reach out to community and faith-based organizations that serve minority populations to recruit eligible individuals.
- Seek eligible minorities through outreach efforts with one-stop partners such as veterans' representatives, vocational rehabilitation representatives, and social service agencies.
- Use multilingual brochures and flyers to reach non-English speaking minority groups and place them in employment centers, community centers, food banks, and one-stop centers.
- Request minority client referrals from one-stop centers, communicate recruitment needs at one-stop partner meetings, and request minority referrals from other partner programs such as Departments of Social Services, the Virginia Employment Commission, veterans' programs, and senior centers.
- Distribute brochures in grocery stores, medical offices, pharmacies, utility payment centers, churches, senior centers, and other places that serve minority individuals.
- Identify new minority recruitment sources in the community that have not previously been approached (churches, day care centers, community centers, and homeless shelters). This should include identifying agencies, businesses, churches, and other organizations that serve Hispanic and Asian seniors.
- Encourage minority participants to recruit family and friends.
- When language barriers are encountered, staff will refer participants to English as a Second Language classes and attempt to find a host agency site that can accommodate language barriers.

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Virginia's greatest community service needs are driven by poverty. For more detailed information about the demographics of localities, please refer to the section detailing equitable distribution.

All communities in Virginia are experiencing a housing crisis. Rent continues to rise, as does inflation. Sub-grantee coordinators have reported increased numbers of applicants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Housing is particularly expensive in urban areas of Virginia, but rural areas are also experiencing a shortage of housing and increased costs to rent and home purchases. Seniors have limited incomes, and cost-of-living increases to Social Security payments are not keeping up with housing prices and inflation.

Grantees and sub-grantees agreed that the most common and universal community service needs of participants are housing assistance, transportation assistance, food assistance, utility support, and temporary financial assistance. Participants also often need guidance navigating the health care system, including Medicare and Medicaid. Other concerns of our participant population are isolation, lack of employment, fear of identity theft, and assistance caring for family members. For our population, that can include parents, children, and/or grandchildren. Sub-grantees in the southwest portion of the state particularly note the community's issue with opioid dependence and abuse. Participants often end up caring for grandchildren when the participant's child has substance abuse issues.

When researching Virginia's community service needs, similar trends emerge. The Community Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Richmond, collects data to identify focus areas for their grants. Their data has identified the following as areas of high need, community vibrancy, economic prosperity, educational success, and health and wellness. Areas of high need also include housing, after school and childcare, and workforce development. Regional health community service needs assessments all identify the need for mental health and substance abuse services, primary health care and preventative health care, and nutrition services.

Virginia is a diverse state, and the needs of different communities are identified by sub-grantees. For instance, urban areas like Richmond or Northern Virginia have more job opportunities and transportation options, but access to affordable housing, nutrition, and utility assistance are needs in those areas. Rural areas have more affordable housing options and lower cost of living but have fewer job opportunities and transportation options.

Participant assessment and community need determine participant placement. Sub-grantees have addressed the need for affordable childcare by placing participants in Head Start programs. Participants may be placed with nutrition programs, senior programs that assist with transportation, health care, or weatherization, and in workforce programs assisting the public in job searching and job skills. Sub-grantees have also placed participants in programs that provide community revitalization and support the arts, and in community service boards that provide mental health and substance abuse support for the community.

SCSEP has a wide reach in Virginia, and participants provide community service in a wide variety of organizations. SCSEP participants have been placed at local Area Agencies on Aging, the Red Cross, the United Way, the Legal Aid Society, senior nutrition and day centers, community colleges, and local organizations such as the Lions Club. Local schools and government agencies also serve as host agencies.

Sub-grantees are experiencing a higher level of applicants who do not meet the SCSEP income requirements, but who continue to need assistance. The DARS SCSEP director will be working with the Office of Workforce Development and Advancement to develop senior-friendly resources at one-stop centers.

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

The past few years have been challenging for SCSEP. The COVID pandemic and ensuing shift in the way businesses are run will affect SCSEP for the foreseeable future. Digital literacy took even more of a front seat, as so many organizations moved to remote work. Telework is still a frequently utilized tool in nonprofit and for-profit employment, and SCSEP participants need the skills to succeed in the increasingly digital employment environment.

SCSEP is an administratively complex program. The amount of original paperwork and frequently updated items like assessments, IEPs, evaluations, and job search forms for each participant requires a good deal of hands-on time from administrative staff. In addition to that, administrative staff must manage the host agency relationships and paperwork, as well as OJE and connections with private employers. Good relationships with all these parties are essential to the success of the program. On top of that, administrative staff are tasked with marketing and recruiting the program and can cover geographically large areas. Most local offices depend on participant staff for basic administrative functions, but the SCSEP coordinator is responsible for monitoring, approving, and correcting all aspects of that administrative work, and for the payroll for participants.

The program continues to add administrative tasks and to rely on a data collection system that is not functioning as planned. Low budgets for staff pay and the time and energy it is taking to learn and enter data into GPMS is frustrating employees, and finding and retaining good SCSEP staff is a challenge.

These issues and lack of funding affect equitable distribution-a coordinator cannot possibly give the same amount of attention to participants and host agencies near their center of operation as they can to outlying areas, which may be over an hour's drive from their office. Frequently the administrative budgets for local offices are so small that they do not fund a full-time staff; SCSEP coordinators often have

additional responsibilities at their agencies. We continue to ask local coordinators to increase their workload without increasing their administrative funding.

One long-term strategy that will improve SCSEP significantly would be to reduce the administrative burden at the local level. Simplifying the assessment process and providing training for case management could be useful. Increased administrative funding would also allow local providers to staff the program at the level that is appropriate and would prevent frequent turnover of local SCSEP staff. The budget limits on administrative funds limit how effective local, state, and national offices can be in serving our population. Increased administrative funding and decreased administrative burdens would increase the attention that can be paid to participants and would increase successful exits. This would give local staff more time to recruit participants, time to train and counsel participants, time to meet with more employers, and time to recruit host agencies with missions that provide training in high demand skills. It is essential that DOLETA understands the workload placed on local SCSEP coordinators.

Providing case management training and supporting the local SCSEP staff is part of the state's long-term strategy to help local SCSEP staff manage their workloads in an effective manner. This is training that many hired into the program do not have, and the frequent monitoring and updates required to participant and host agency paperwork and relationships can be overwhelming.

Grantees will continue to provide labor market information to sub-grantees to improve placements and employment goals. Grantees will continue to improve SCSEP services as follows:

- Continue to advocate on behalf of participants to ensure that the needs of older workers are heard, and to ensure that employers understand the necessity of engaging older workers.
- Seek opportunities to increase collaboration among grantees to include sharing information and best practices and identifying and addressing common issues and challenges.
- Continue to participate in local and state WIOA planning processes.
- Continue to analyze the results of DOL's participant and host agency satisfaction surveys to determine how to improve services.
- Increase outreach to most-in-need populations, including leveraging relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation centers, Veterans Affairs and veterans' groups, disability groups, cultural groups in local communities, adult education programs, and other programs designed to provide services to the most-in-need populations.
- Training of local SCSEP service deliverers to focus on achievement of performance goals.

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

As has been mentioned several times in this section of the plan, digital literacy is one of the major barriers to employment that SCSEP participants face. Grantees and sub-grantees must provide options for training that will bring SCSEP participants up to speed on technology being used in the workforce. Connections to adult education services and local community colleges are essential in terms of training outside of community service assignments. DARS will continue to develop relationships with local community colleges, and to encourage SCSEP participants to look at educational opportunities. In Virginia, people who are 65 and older who meet income criteria can take community college classes for free.

The most important element in any participant's training is to first determine what skills are in demand by employers in that participant's local area. The second is to determine the skill sets possessed by each participant that relate to those in-demand jobs. The third is to determine the skill gaps for each participant, and to determine how the program can link that participant to training that will fill those gaps.

Participants will be trained for high demand occupations in health care, security, customer service, and transportation. This will benefit the participant by preparing them for better paying jobs as they exit the program. Investment in short-term training like CNA, CDL, or customer service certification will lead to higher employment and quicker turnover for participants. By ensuring that participants exit the program in a reasonable time frame to unsubsidized employment, each grant creates more space in the program for new enrollees. Training in high demand occupations will increase the number of participants who enter employment, achieve retention, and have higher average earnings than they would without the program and that specific training.

Grantees will utilize On the Job Experience (OJE), particularly in rural areas, to help participants develop an "edge" with employers in a rapidly disappearing job market in rural areas. The economic downturn has disproportionately affected rural areas, and affects population and employment opportunities in those areas, as many people relocate to urban areas with better educational and employment opportunities.

Virginia grantees will also:

- Focus on increasing awareness of the program. Many employers, community service organizations and potentially eligible participants are not aware of the benefits offered by the SCSEP. By increasing awareness of the program and of the value of older workers among these groups, grantees should see an increase in the number and quality of placements. By increasing the number of placements into quality community service experiences and unsubsidized employment, Virginia will serve more of the eligible population.
- Provide on-going training to sub-grantees to improve their performance in meeting the common measure performance goals of employment, retention, and earnings. This will include trainings on topics such as performance measures, data management, case management, employer engagement, addressing barriers, and job search strategies.
- Provide additional training to participants through WIOA services. These resources include basic learning skills, upgrading computer skills, enrollment with WIOA for vocational education, resume writing, and assistance with job placement.
- Encourage local sub-grantees to participate in job fairs targeted to older workers.
- Ensure that efforts are made to establish rapport with employers who have reliable career pathways and who are willing to develop and maintain working relationships with SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

SCSEP projects are authorized in most localities in the Commonwealth. Three national grantees (AARP, NCOA and Goodwill) manage programs alongside the DARS state SCSEP. The number of SCSEP slots that each locality received is based on a formula that takes into account the number of individuals aged 55 and up who are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level, based on U.S. Census data. These slots are assigned by DOLETA. Grantees and sub-grantees strive to serve eligible participants under Priority of Service requirements. Priority of service is given to participants who fit one or more of the following descriptors:

Veterans and Qualified Spouses

Persons 65 or older

Individuals who:

- have a disability
- have limited English proficiency

- have low literacy skills
- reside in a rural area
- have low employment prospects
- fail to find employment through WIOA Title I services
- are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Authorized slot levels, seen in Appendix A, are based on U.S. Census levels alone. Modified slots are based on the highest available minimum wage, which in Virginia, is currently \$12/hour. Modified slot levels can be seen in Appendix B.

Most of Virginia's greatest community needs are driven by poverty. Virginia's poverty level in 2020, per the U.S. Census Income and Poverty data, was 10.6%.

Per the U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for 2020, the following localities have poverty levels above 20%.

Locality	Poverty Level
Radford City	25.6%
Lee County	25.1%
Harrisonburg City	25.0%
Greensville County	24.4%
Danville City	24.2%
Buchanan County	23.9%
Montgomery County	23.3%
Petersburg City	22.8%
Dickenson County	22.0%
Charlottesville City	21.6%
Brunswick County	21.3%
Emporia City	21.1%
Richmond City	21.1%
Nottoway County	21.0%
Galax City	21.0%
Lexington City	21.0%
Hopewell City	20.8%
Norton City	20.4%

These areas span the entirety of Virginia, and from very rural to some of the largest urban areas in the state. All these areas have active SCSEP offices. Virginia's SCSEP population is increasing in diversity, and populations that have special needs require additional attention, more intensive and comprehensive services, and in many cases, unique approaches, and partnerships. Grantees depend on the local

sub-grantees' knowledge of local areas and determining how to implement policy in a diverse state.

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

Please refer to Appendix A for a listing of counties and cities, and how many SCSEP slots have been allotted to them.

Appendix A – SCSEP Slots by Locality

COUNTY_NAME	TOTAL AP SLOTS FOR LOCALITY	Total Enrolled	Variance
Accomack County	7	6	1
Albemarle County	9	2	7
Alexandria city	12	4	8
Alleghany County	4	3	1
Amelia County	2	1	1
Amherst County	5	4	1
Appomattox County	3	3	0
Arlington County	13	12	1
Augusta County	10	3	7
Bedford County	10	5	5
Botetourt County	4	2	2
Bristol city	4	4	0
Brunswick County	4	5	-1
Buchanan County	7	1	6
Buckingham County	3	2	1
Buena Vista city	1	0	1
Campbell County	8	0	8
Caroline County	3	0	3
Carroll County	7	2	5
Charles City County	2	0	2
Charlotte County	3	0	3
Charlottesville city	5	4	1
Chesapeake city	15	3	12
Chesterfield County	21	15	6
Clarke County	2	0	2
Colonial Heights city	2	0	2
Covington city	1	0	1
Craig County	2	0	2
Culpeper County	6	0	6
Cumberland County	3	2	1

COUNTY_NAME	TOTAL AP SLOTS FOR LOCALITY	Total Enrolled	Variance
Danville city	10	9	1
Dickenson County	5	2	3
Dinwiddie County	5	1	4
Emporia city	2	2	0
Essex County	2	0	2
Fairfax County	63	92	-29
Fairfax city	0	5	-5
Fauquier County	5	0	5
Floyd County	4	3	1
Fluvanna County	2	6	-4
Franklin County	12	3	9
Frederick County	8	4	4
Fredericksburg city	3	4	-1
Giles County	3	3	0
Gloucester County	4	2	2
Goochland County	2	0	2
Grayson County	4	3	1
Greene County	2	2	0
Greensville County	2	3	-1
Halifax County	8	18	-10
Hampton city	19	24	-5
Hanover County	7	2	5
Harrisonburg city	4	1	3
Henrico County	27	24	3
Henry County	13	6	7
Highland County	1	1	0
Hopewell city	3	0	3
Isle of Wight County	4	0	4
James City County	5	2	3
King and Queen County	2	0	2
Lancaster County	2	2	0
Lee County	8	5	3
Lexington city	1	0	1
Loudoun County	12	3	9
Louisa County	6	0	6
Lunenburg County	3	4	-1
Lynchburg city	9	9	0
Madison County	2	0	2
Manassas Park city	1	1	0
Manassas city	2	0	2
Martinsville city	3	1	2

COUNTY_NAME	TOTAL AP SLOTS FOR LOCALITY	Total Enrolled	Variance
Mathews County	2	0	2
Mecklenburg County	8	11	-3
Middlesex County	3	0	3
Montgomery County	8	0	8
Nelson County	3	1	2
New Kent County	2	0	2
Newport News city	22	41	-19
Norfolk city	34	38	-4
Northampton County	4	3	1
Northumberland County	2	5	-3
Norton city	2	2	0
Nottoway County	3	1	2
Orange County	4	4	0
Page County	4	0	4
Patrick County	5	3	2
Petersburg city	7	0	7
Pittsylvania County	11	15	-4
Portsmouth city	15	12	3
Powhatan County	2	0	2
Prince Edward County	3	4	-1
Prince George County	1	0	1
Prince William County	20	15	5
Pulaski County	5	5	0
Radford city	2	3	-1
Rappahannock County	1	0	1
Richmond County	2	4	-2
Richmond city	41	49	-8
Roanoke County	9	6	3
Roanoke city	19	35	-16
Rockbridge County	4	3	1
Rockingham County	10	2	8
Russell County	9	0	9
Salem city	2	1	1
Scott County	6	2	4
Shenandoah County	6	1	5
Smyth County	7	5	2
Southampton County	3	0	3
Spotsylvania County	10	4	6
Stafford County	5	1	4
Staunton city	4	1	3
Suffolk city	10	1	9

COUNTY_NAME	TOTAL AP SLOTS FOR LOCALITY	Total Enrolled	Variance
Sussex County	2	3	-1
Tazewell County	9	11	-2
Virginia Beach city	28	9	19
Warren County	4	0	4
Washington County	11	17	-6
Waynesboro city	3	2	1
Westmoreland County	3	2	1
Williamsburg city	1	0	1
Winchester city	3	9	-6
Wise County	7	2	5
Wythe County	6	2	4
York County	4	0	4
TOTAL	859	665	

The biggest change has been in modified slots (Appendix B). The minimum wage in Virginia increased in January of 2023 to \$12/hour, which impacted modified slots.

Appendix B – Change in Modified Slots

COUNTY_NAME	Total Modified Approved Slots	Total Enrolled	Total Variance
Accomack County	4	6	-2
Albemarle County	5	2	3
Alexandria city	7	4	3
Alleghany County	2	3	-1
Amelia County	1	1	0
Amherst County	3	4	-1
Appomattox County	2	3	-1
Arlington County	8	12	-4
Augusta County	6	3	3
Bedford County	6	5	1
Botetourt County	2	2	0
Bristol city	3	4	-1
Brunswick County	2	5	-3
Buchanan County	4	1	3
Buckingham County	2	2	0
Buena Vista city	1	0	1
Campbell County	5	0	5
Caroline County	2	0	2

COUNTY_NAME	Total Modified Approved Slots	Total Enrolled	Total Variance
Carroll County	4	2	2
Charles City County	1	0	1
Charlotte County	2	0	2
Charlottesville city	3	4	-1
Chesapeake city	9	3	6
Chesterfield County	13	15	-2
Clarke County	1	0	1
Colonial Heights city	1	0	1
Covington city	1	0	1
Craig County	1	0	1
Culpeper County	4	0	4
Cumberland County	2	2	0
Danville city	6	9	-3
Dickenson County	3	2	1
Dinwiddie County	3	1	2
Emporia city	1	2	-1
Essex County	1	0	1
Fairfax city	0	5	-5
Fairfax County	38	92	-54
Fauquier County	3	0	3
Floyd County	2	3	-1
Fluvanna County	1	6	-5
Franklin County	7	3	4
Frederick County	5	4	1
Fredericksburg city	2	4	-2
Giles County	2	3	-1
Gloucester County	2	2	0
Goochland County	1	0	1
Grayson County	2	3	-1
Greene County	1	2	-1
Greensville County	1	3	-2
Halifax County	4	18	-14
Hampton city	11	24	-13
Hanover County	4	2	2
Harrisonburg city	2	1	1
Henrico County	16	24	-8
Henry County	8	6	2
Highland County	1	1	0
Hopewell city	2	0	2
Isle of Wight County	2	0	2
James City County	3	2	1

COUNTY_NAME	Total Modified Approved Slots	Total Enrolled	Total Variance
King and Queen County	1	0	1
Lancaster County	1	2	-1
Lee County	5	5	0
Lexington city	1	0	1
Loudoun County	7	3	4
Louisa County	4	0	4
Lunenburg County	2	4	-2
Lynchburg city	5	9	-4
Madison County	1	0	1
Manassas city	1	0	1
Manassas Park city	1	1	0
Martinsville city	2	1	1
Mathews County	1	0	1
Mecklenburg County	5	11	-6
Middlesex County	2	0	2
Montgomery County	5	0	5
Nelson County	2	1	1
New Kent County	1	0	1
Newport News city	13	41	-28
Norfolk city	20	38	-18
Northampton County	2	3	-1
Northumberland County	1	5	-4
Norton city	1	2	-1
Nottoway County	2	1	1
Orange County	2	4	-2
Page County	2	0	2
Patrick County	3	3	0
Petersburg city	4	0	4
Pittsylvania County	7	15	-8
Portsmouth city	9	12	-3
Powhatan County	1	0	1
Prince Edward County	2	4	-2
Prince George County	1	0	1
Prince William County	12	15	-3
Pulaski County	3	5	-2
Radford city	1	3	-2
Rappahannock	1	0	1

COUNTY_NAME	Total Modified Approved Slots	Total Enrolled	Total Variance
County			
Richmond city	25	49	-24
Richmond County	1	4	-3
Roanoke city	11	35	-24
Roanoke County	5	6	-1
Rockbridge County	2	3	-1
Rockingham County	6	2	4
Russell County	5	0	5
Salem city	1	1	0
Scott County	3	2	1
Shenandoah County	4	1	3
Smyth County	4	5	-1
Southampton County	2	0	2
Spotsylvania County	6	4	2
Stafford County	3	1	2
Staunton city	2	1	1
Suffolk city	6	1	5
Sussex County	1	3	-2
Tazewell County	5	11	-6
Virginia Beach city	17	9	8
Warren County	2	0	2
Washington County	6	17	-11
Waynesboro city	2	2	0
Westmoreland County	2	2	0
Williamsburg city	1	0	1
Winchester city	2	9	-7
Wise County	4	2	2
Wythe County	3	2	1
York County	2	0	2
Total	508	665	-157

3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

The top ten over-enrolled areas are listed below.

Locality	Over-enrollment
Fairfax County	54
Newport News	28

Locality	Over-enrollment
Richmond city	24
Roanoke city	24
Halifax County	18
Hampton city	14
Washington County	13
Henrico County	11
Pittsylvania County	8
Winchester City	8

The top ten under-enrolled areas are listed below.

Locality	Under-enrollment
Virginia Beach	8
Chesapeake City	6
Campbell County	5
Montgomery County	5
Russell County	5
Suffolk City	5
Culpeper County	4
Franklin County	4
Loudoun County	4
Louisa County	4
Petersburg City	4

Grantees use the equitable distribution report in the GPMS system to identify over and under-enrolled localities, and to provide technical support to local sub-grantees to gradually shift positions to those underserved areas. No participant is ever exited to meet equitable distribution. Large urban areas are more likely to be over-enrolled, as SCSEP sub-grantees are likely to be located within their borders, and because public transportation is more accessible. More rural areas tend to be under-enrolled, especially those far from a SCSEP sub-grantee.

Host agencies are also limited in rural areas. To enroll a participant, the sub-grantee must have a host agency for placement that is appropriate for that participant.

Another issue that affects equitable distribution is that several of Virginia's localities have two SCSEP grantees with approved spots working in that area. Sixteen of the localities in Virginia have two SCSEP sub-grantees working in their communities. See Appendix C for overlapping grantee service areas.

Appendix C – Localities with two SCSEP sub-grantees

COUNTY_NAME
Bristol city
Carroll County
Chesterfield County
Franklin County
Grayson County
Henrico County
Henry County
Martinsville city
Patrick County
Richmond city
Richmond County
Scott County
Smyth County
Washington County
Wise County
Wythe County
TOTAL

In larger areas, like the city of Richmond, the fact that both the state and AARP have SCSEP slots makes sense, as it's a heavily populated area. Senior Connections, the DARS sub-grantee that represents Richmond, frequently works with AARP to design training and to refer participants to different programs. In less populated areas, however, having two grantees may create conflict. For instance, in Bristol, a city in far southwest Virginia, the state and Goodwill have slots. There are limited host agency opportunities in this area, and having two sponsors can cause confusion for applicants and participants, as hours and operation of the program may vary.

Ensuring SCSEP positions are equitably distributed is an ongoing effort. The state's long-term strategy for achieving equitable distribution for SCSEP positions is to gradually transfer positions from over-served to under-served areas within the state. This is the only way to avoid disruption to current participants, and to maintain the program stability necessary to operate quality programs. Sub-grantees are educated on equitable distribution regularly and are encouraged to work towards that goal. However, grantees do not recommend holding a spot open in an under-enrolled area if an applicant can be found in an over-served area, particularly if that sub-grantee is under-enrolled overall.

4. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

DOL requests an equitable distribution report be prepared annually showing the distribution of SCSEP enrollee positions among all political jurisdictions (independent cities and counties) in each state. DARS has the responsibility for the actual preparation and submission of the report to DOL, however, this is a collaborative effort involving all SCSEP grantees in Virginia. This report provides the basic information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of SCSEP enrollees served by the state program (DARS) and national contractor organizations within the state. Grantees use information to determine where slots need to be moved from over-served to under-served areas. Grantees within the state have a long history of accomplishing this task cooperatively without disruption to participants.

All state grantees will take the following steps to work towards equitable distribution:

- Collecting data and preparing reports to determine the present status of equitable distribution and communicating that data with the sub-grantees.
- Sub-grantees and grantees will focus SCSEP marketing in under-served areas. These efforts include:
 - Newspaper ads in local papers
 - Human interest stories in local papers
 - Radio spots describing the program and its intended audience
 - Mailings both to individuals and to public and private entities in under-served communities that interact with potential SCSEP clients
 - Utilizing social media and grantee and sub-grantee websites to reach potential applicants.
- Continuing outreach within the support community, including DARS local offices in under-served areas. SCSEP grantees will continue meeting with and developing partnerships with local social service agencies, non-profits, and other community groups that interact with potential participants. This will not be limited to those groups that work with the elderly, as word of mouth is an effective tool for SCSEP. For example, a parent with a child in Head Start may see a flyer for SCSEP and refer an older family member. Often agencies that are contacted for recruiting purposes can become host agencies, as well.
- Educating sub-grantees about equitable distribution and designated slot levels in their localities.

- As slots open in over-served areas, sub-grantees will be encouraged to enroll participants in under-served areas. This will prevent disruption in the program and gradually shift slots back to under-served areas.
- All DARS sub-grantees submit recruitment plans with their annual contract or contract renewal. These identify under-served areas and provide steps the sub-grantees will take to recruit in those areas.

B. Equitably serves rural and urban areas.

To reach and serve eligible individuals in rural and isolated areas with limited resources, grantees will continue outreach and collaborative efforts with host agencies, employers, transportation providers, and other community support providers within those regions.

During analysis of equitable distribution, it was noted that most urban areas are over-enrolled, as those living in urban areas generally have better access to transportation and are closer to a sub-grantee. Under-served areas are more likely to be rural, due to lack of transportation in those areas, and other geographical challenges that older workers in Virginia face. A rural participant may live up to or over an hour drive from any local SCSEP office, or to most host agencies in the area.

To increase services in rural areas, grantees will focus marketing efforts in those areas, including advertisements in local papers. Most sub-grantees have access to transportation services and will partner with those programs as much as possible to help participants get to host sites and training opportunities. Local SCSEP offices will also work with rural VEC and Workforce offices, as mentioned earlier in the plan, to identify potential participants.

Those sub-grantees that serve particularly large geographic areas may also need to identify a secondary location that can be used to meet participants who are geographically distant from the sub-grantee agency. As urban participants exit the program, sub-grantees will be encouraged to actively recruit in rural areas to increase equitable distribution between urban and rural localities.

Some grantees are also expanding OJE opportunities to rural areas. If host agencies are limited, a private employer may be a better option for a training opportunity for a rural participant.

C. Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)

Virginia grantees have a long history of serving eligible individuals who are most in need. We will continue to recruit and enroll individuals who meet priority of service requirements. Priority service is offered to qualified veterans and their spouses, individuals aged 65 and older, and those who have disabilities, limited English proficiency, low literacy, who reside in a rural area. Have low employment prospects, have failed to find employment after using services under Title I of WIOA,

and/or are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We will continue to build upon relationships with organizations serving individuals who qualify for priority of service. DARS sub-grantees are required to submit a recruitment plan that breaks down specific recruitment efforts for each priority of service category. Each grantee and sub-grantee identify agencies that provide services to these populations and ensures that those agencies are aware of the services SCSEP provides.

The data showing service to most in need is not currently available through GPMS.

Grantees and sub-grantees work to identify other agencies, both public and private, that serve these populations. Once initial contact is made, a partnership can be created between SCSEP and other programs and agencies that ensures that eligible individuals who are interested in employment are directed to the program. Below is a chart with some examples of partner agencies for each Priority of Service/Most in Need factor.

Veteran	VFW organizations, veterans' hospitals, other veteran centered organizations
Age 65 or older	Local agencies on aging and senior centers
Disability	Local DARS offices and advocacy groups
Low literacy or LEP	Adult education centers, cultural centers for immigrant population, ESL courses
Reside in Rural Area	Local departments of social services, food banks, churches, schools
Failed to find employment under WIOA	Local VEC, WIB, and One-stop centers
Homeless or at risk of homelessness	Local shelters, housing departments, and advocacy groups
Below the poverty level	Local shelters, SNAP offices, AAAs, senior centers
Re-entry	Local Parole boards, nonprofits that assist this population, local jails and prisons.

5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

Per the United States Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey, the

population of Virginia is 8.683.619. Of that population, 2,573,030 are 55 or older. Per America's Health Rankings, 8% of Virginians over 65 live below the poverty level.

6. THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State

Per the Rural Health Information Hub, 12.4% of Virginians live in a nonmetro area. Based on 2020 American Community Survey census data, the poverty level in rural Virginia is higher than the overall level, at 14.9% (The state overall poverty rate is 10.3%). People in rural areas are less likely to have completed high school, and the unemployment rate in rural Virginia is also higher than urban areas.

B. Have the greatest economic need

The SCSEP grant serves individuals who are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. Grantees and sub-grantees prioritize those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low unemployment prospects, and/or those receiving Social Security or Social Security Disability payments. All SCSEP participants have an economic need for assistance.

C. Are minorities

Please see section b(3) regarding services to minorities. The table below details the overall minority population in Virginia, and the service level to minorities of the four SCSEP grantees.

Virginia Minority % (2022 Census)	% Served by State	% Served by AARP	% Served by Goodwill	% Served by NCOA
31.5%	62.1%	91.0%	40.9%	76.8%

D. Are limited English proficient.

It is difficult to determine the number of ESL participants being served, as the GPMS data collection system does not currently have a functioning report on that factor. While we do see participants entering the program with limited English proficiency, grantees and sub-grantees have noted that fear of immigration legal issues may deter non-native English speakers or those with limited English proficiency from seeking out that program. However, DARS has been able to enroll participants who have limited English proficiency and enroll them in ESL courses. One participant is now studying for her citizenship test.

E. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

SCSEP serves a population that often falls through the cracks of workforce development. Given the poverty levels and most in need factors of our participants,

SCSEP serves a population that has a great social need. Older adults tend to be discriminated against in hiring and may be limited in the things they can do and the hours they can work. Older individuals are also more likely to experience loneliness and isolation, which can affect physical and mental health. Unfortunately, due to GPMS issues, we cannot provide information about the number of most in need factors the average participant has documented.

7. A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

When new Census data indicates that there has been a shift in location of the eligible population within the state, resulting in over-enrollment, or when there is over-enrollment for other reasons, Virginia's grantees will gradually shift positions to avoid disruptions to participants. Enrollment will cease in the over-enrolled area, but participants who are currently enrolled in that area stay in the program until they gain employment or exit for another reason. Participation is never terminated due to over-enrollment. The grantees are committed to ensuring that participants will not lose positions because of transfer of slots. Priority will be given to minimizing disruption to current participants, and shifts will occur as positions become available through normal attrition.

Virginia has had several reductions in modified slots due to the staggered increases in minimum wage. When an increase is approaching, sub-grantees meet with the grantee to determine what current enrollment is, and what the new modified slot level is anticipated to be. Sub-grantees may slow enrollment to ensure that they have enough funding to continue to serve the participants actively enrolled. No participants were or will be exited due to a minimum wage increase.

When grantees exchange slots, DOL must approve of the final slot distribution. If slots are moved between grantees, the involved grantees work together to ensure that participants who are enrolled in those slots remain enrolled in the program, and in their host agencies when possible. Grantees and sub-grantees meet with participants who will be affected and answer any questions that may come up in that process. Any paperwork that can be transferred to the new grantee (IEPs, assessments, supervisor and participant evaluations) move with the participant to the new grantee/sub-grantee.

When redistribution of SCSEP slots occurs because of a national grant competition, every effort is made to ensure that there is no disruption in service to participants, and that there is a seamless transition of participants to the new grantee. This has been successfully accomplished during past competitions, and grantees will continue to assist participants who are moved from one grantee/sub-grantee to another. Steps include the following:

-
- Timely meetings with participants and host agency supervisors.
 - Transfer of all required files and records to the receiving grantee.
 - Ensuring that participants are placed on the recipient grantee's payroll in a timely manner.
 - Host agency placements continue for a minimum of 90 days, if the participant chooses to stay.
 - Job-ready participants are encouraged to search for and move to unsubsidized employment, creating open positions for other individuals in the state.

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS:

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)

applies to applicants for grant awards under this program.

ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW GRANT AWARDS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

Please respond to the following requests for information:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation operates under the mission of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) which states; "DARS' mission: to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families." To this end, the Vocational Rehabilitation program, including the Supported Employment program ensures quality and equitable access to people with disabilities seeking career/vocational advancement by providing active outreach to marginalized communities, ensuring the availability of our offices/staff in every county in Virginia as well as co-locating many of our offices, and providing services in all of the one-stop centers. Through our partnerships with local educational school districts, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are available in every school district ensuring that equitable access occurs through K-12 educational programming. These services are also available to charter and alternative schools and by direct parent referral of a student aged 14-22. DARS VR actively partners with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to ensure services are available through our Community Service Boards (CSBs) located across the state. Through state grant funding, specialized Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) serve substance abuse and mental health consumers. These services are available statewide.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation, including the Supported Employment program, is committed to equitable consumer participation based on the unique and individual needs of consumers. This commitment is outlined and further described in our state VR policies, that ensure equitable access to the vocational rehabilitation program and supported employment program across all populations represented in Virginia. DARS routinely reviews statewide demographic and consumer access data and creates district benchmarks to increase accessibility and outreach to representative populations. To further ensure access to services for all consumers, policies have been updated to ensure interpretation and translation services can be accessed by all consumers. Additionally, DARS Policy staff remains abreast of the disability access requirements in federal and state law and regulation.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Virginia General VR is committed to the provision of equitable access to all eligible consumers, and we continue to strategize operational enhancements to address barriers as they are identified. Identified barriers include:

- Geographic proximity to services for consumers
- Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Geographic proximity to services: Virginia VR maintains fully staffed, full-service offices (30 statewide) many are rural in designation and/or are co-located within one-stop centers to ensure the widest coverage and availability of services statewide. Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling staff are assigned individual schools to provide required Pre-ETS activities and outreach to surrounding communities. General VR Counselors are assigned by county and/or specific territory in urban areas. The use of community-based internet sites ensures that VR staff can work in the closest proximity to assigned caseloads. In addition, the use of video conferencing as well as payment of consumer transportation costs can mitigate consumer equity and access to services.

DARS will expand services to areas across the Commonwealth that have limited choice of provider options by: (a) identifying areas of the state where SE services

are not readily accessible and (b) establish initiatives to assist existing ESOs to expand into underserved areas.

Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre-Employment Transition Services: DARS continues to partner with Employment Service Organizations (ESO) statewide to build and sustain quality Pre-ETS programming/Work Based learning for student and youth populations. This capacity building has expanded to ESOs that provide services across state lines which has resulted in new providers with strong reputations for service excellence moving into border communities in our southernmost points of the state. We will continue to support growth and expansion.

DARS receives and utilizes stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services (LTESS) state funds and fostering close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations.

The Virginia legislature provides state funds to Employment Services Organizations to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community-based employment options for persons with most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services is available to Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs.

Regional meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities are conducted across regions. These sessions address increasing supported-employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC continues to provide training and technical assistance to Employment Service Organizations related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment. Recently mentoring and technical assistance has been added to help develop the proficiency of provider staff to provide Customized Employment.

Implementing the Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report will provide information to VR counselors and their consumers on the performance of each Employment Services Organization to inform decisions regarding service provision.

DARS will obtain stakeholder insights and assistance through the Employment Services Organization Provider Network. The network represents a cross-section of stakeholders and DARS' staff meets regularly with the Network members to: (a) provide ideas and recommendations regarding program changes and procedures; (b) identify and address special regional needs, unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities, and needs of different populations of individuals with disabilities; and (c) provide information to the Department and help develop priorities and initiatives.

DARS will work collaboratively with the Employment Services Organization Provider Network. The network represents a cross-section of stakeholders and meets regularly to: (a) provide ideas and recommendations regarding program changes and procedures; (b) identify and address special regional needs, unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities, and needs of different populations of individuals with disabilities; and (c) provide information to the Department and help develop priorities and initiatives.

Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities: Following the pandemic, access to some schools/districts had been restricted as relationships between Virginia VR and educational districts needed to be strengthened and rebuilt. 2022-23 brought increased outreach where access had been limited. VR districts held large events focused on services to students with disabilities that were well attended by educators and partners. These efforts brought increased VR visibility and educator engagement in the collaborative process. These efforts will continue and expand with the Virginia Department of Education Transition staff who have jointly held meetings with Special Education Directors (SPED), special education teachers and Virginia VR statewide.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Virginia VR began efforts to mitigate identified barriers in 2022 following the pandemic and as operations expanded. Community outreach and efforts targeted on increasing agency visibility are a key priority of all statewide field offices. These efforts will continue and will be sustained ongoing as an effort to increase public perception and general knowledge of the contribution the VR process makes to strengthening the lives and employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages.

Targeted community outreach to increase visibility and equity of service access began in 2023 which led to an increase in VR applications statewide. These efforts will continue and will be expanded based on demographic and service data as it informs our current efforts.

The expansion of Pre-ETS services for students with disabilities is the focus of our efforts in 2023-24. Increasing visibility, access to quality programming, expanding relationships with special education transition and school personnel as well as increasing vendor capacity as well as full utilization and expenditure of Pre-ETS set aside dollars are outlined in our corrective action plan.

Notes:

1. Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.
2. Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
3. Applicants may have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

Appendix 1: Performance Goals for The Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

Include the state's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

	Title I – Adult Program			
	Program Year 2024		Program Year 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	78.50%		78.50%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	79.50%		79.50%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,100.00		\$6,100.00	
Credential Attainment Rate	75.00%		75.00%	
Measurable Skill Gains	68.50%		68.50%	

	Title I – Dislocated Worker Program			
	Program Year 2024		Program Year 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	86.00%		86.00%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	82.50%		82.50%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$8,900.00		\$8,900.00	
Credential Attainment Rate	72.50%		72.50%	
Measurable Skill Gains	62.00%		62.00%	

	Title I – Youth Program			
	Program Year 2024		Program Year 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ¹	73.50%		73.50%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²	72.00%		72.00%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$3,400.00		\$3,400.00	
Credential Attainment Rate	68.50%		68.50%	
Measurable Skill Gains	60.50%		60.50%	

¹ For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

² For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

	Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program			
	Program Year 2024		Program Year 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	25.5		26.0	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	26.5		27.0	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$5,575.00		\$5,650.00	
Credential Attainment Rate	28.0		28.5	
Measurable Skill Gains	28.0		28.5	

Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

	Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program			
	Program Year 2024		Program Year 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	70.5%		70.5%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70.5%		70.5%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,000.00		\$6,000.00	
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

	Vocational Rehabilitation Program			
	Program Year: 2024		Program Year: 2025	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ²²	55%		57%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²²	54%		56%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ³	\$3,909		\$4,200	
Credential Attainment Rate	63%		66%	
Measurable Skill Gains	89%		91.5%	

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