

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT**

**VIRGINIA WORKFORCE LETTER (VWL) #12-03**

**TO:** LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

**FROM:** OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**SUBJECT:** Requirements for Virginia Workforce Network 2012 Local Plans

**DATE:** October 15, 2012

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**Purpose:**

To establish guidance and parameters for submission of local plans under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

**References:**

- Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Section 111(d)(2)(B); Section 117(d)(1); Section 117(h)(4)(A); and Section 118;
- 20 CFR Part 664.460, WIA Final Rules;
- Virginia Workforce Council Policy10-01 – One Stop Service Delivery System;
- The Promise of Career Pathways Systems Change: What role should workforce investment systems play? What benefits will result? (click [here](#) for report link);
- *Building Career Pathways to Success: Virginia's Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Integrated State Plan 2012-2017* (click here for link); and,
- Virginia Workforce Network Statewide Partner Memorandum of Understanding (click here for link)

**Background:**

Section 118 of WIA establishes the requirement that each Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) shall develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive 5-year local plan, in partnership with the appropriate chief elected official. WIA further requires plans to be consistent with the State Plan. In previous years, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), in its role as administrator for the Workforce Investment Act, promulgated guidance and reviewed local plans on behalf of the Governor. Local areas submitted updated plans in 2009 through 2011.

In 2012, the Governor's Strategic Workforce Plan was developed along with the WIA and Wagner-Peyser Integrated State Plan (State Plan). This five year State Plan covers the period July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2017. The Statewide Partner Memorandum of Understanding was also

revised in conjunction with the State Plan, and covers the same timeframe. The VCCS will continue, in its role as WIA administrative agency, to prepare guidance and review local plans on behalf of the Governor. The VCCS office of Workforce Development Services will also collaborate with the Governor's Director of Education and Workforce Development as well as the Virginia Workforce Council, in the review and approval of local plans.

The state recognizes that many local areas have already engaged in robust strategic planning activities with local and regional workforce stakeholders. In those instances where strategic workforce planning efforts are already underway, this guidance should be used as a supplemental tool for the local area. Local areas are not required to follow any particular plan format or structure. However, local plans must address each of the areas as noted in the Virginia Workforce System Policy Emphasis section of this guidance. Local plans must also adhere to the requirements as outlined in the Local Plan Contents and Process section of this guidance. It is not necessary to address the policy emphasis areas separately from the specific plan content elements; local areas are encouraged to incorporate responses to the emphasis areas noted below throughout the local plan document as appropriate.

### **Virginia Workforce System Policy Emphasis:**

The areas noted below are emphasis areas statewide, and must be addressed in local plans to meet the requirement of consistency with the State Plan, in accordance with WIA Section 118.

#### *Career Pathways*

The mission of the Virginia Workforce Network is to prepare individuals for the careers of today and tomorrow, and connect businesses to a highly skilled workforce. In order to achieve this mission, Virginia incorporates the Career Pathways model in the implementation of statewide workforce development programs. Career Pathways is an effective strategy to help individuals of all skill levels—and particularly those who are low-skilled—to pursue, progress through and complete the education and training they need to attain industry-recognized credentials and secure employment that leads to self-sufficiency and sustainability. In a report titled *The Promise of Career Pathways Systems Change: What role should workforce investment systems play? What benefits will result?*, authors describe career pathways as a clear sequence of education and training courses and credentials that are built around eight key attributes (Clagett and Uhalde, 2011):

- Accelerated/Integrated Education and Training combining adult education with postsecondary technical training, giving credit for prior learning, and adopting other strategies that accelerate educational and career advancement of participants;
- Contextualized Learning focused on curricula and instructional strategies that make work a central context for learning and help students attain work-readiness skills;
- Designs for Working Learners to meet the needs of adults and nontraditional students who often need to combine work and study, providing child care services and accommodating work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, and innovative uses of technology;
- Industry-recognized Credentials leading to the attainment of industry-recognized degrees or credentials that have value in the labor market;

- Intensive Wraparound Services incorporating academic and career counseling and wraparound support services (particularly at points of transition), and the development of individual career plans;
- Multiple Entry and Exit Points enabling workers of varying education and skill levels to enter or advance in a specific sector or occupational field;
- Sector Strategies aligned with the skill needs of industry sectors important to state and regional economies, where employers are actively engaged in determining skill requirements for employment and career progression in high-demand occupations; and,
- Stackable Educational/Training Options that include secondary, adult, and postsecondary education and training that is arranged or “chunked” in a non-duplicative progression of courses, clearly articulating one level of instruction to the next. They provide opportunities to earn postsecondary credits and postsecondary credentials that have labor market value.

The report outlines the various roles and actions that local Workforce Investment Boards can undertake with other system partners in the development and implementation of successful career pathways systems. LWIBs are encouraged to incorporate the suggested roles and actions within local plans, as appropriate.

#### *Branding & Customer Service*

One of the primary themes in the State Plan is the need for a coordinated and comprehensive outreach and awareness effort for the Virginia Workforce Network. The consensus of the stakeholders is that the workforce system should have consistent branding across the state and customers in all regions will have access to high quality services and products. Local plans must outline strategies to articulate and deliver on the brand of high quality customer service for the local Virginia Workforce Network. Plans should also include a description of the logos, taglines, and other branding strategies currently in use or anticipated.

#### *Business Services*

Virginia’s state workforce plan outlines a renewed focus on business as a primary One-stop customer. LWIAs are encouraged to collaborate with partner agencies to build integrated business services teams comprised of WIA, Wagner Peyser, and other mandated state partners. The teams must develop an integrated approach to serving businesses and establish a single point of contact. Local plans should include specific strategies to expand business participation in the local and regional workforce system, as well as specific strategies to support the needs of entrepreneurs.

#### *Credential Attainment*

The Governor, through the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), has targeted the advanced manufacturing, aerospace, global logistics, information technology, clean energy, and life sciences industries for recruitment over the next five years. The specific skills needed in these target areas will vary according to the specific business and employer. However, it is clear that careers in each of the targeted industries will require advanced education and skills upgrades for individuals who are currently unemployed and/or underemployed. The percentage of the unemployed population in Virginia with no post-secondary education was over 40 percent in

July 2012. These trends have been similar for the past three years, with a HS/GED holders averaging 38 percent of the total population of unemployed claimants from July 2009 through July 2012.

The State Plan includes a goal of increasing credential attainment in demand occupations. The plan acknowledges that this may require a multi-step process for many jobseekers with skills deficiencies. Local plans should include specific strategies to ensure that jobseekers can access contextualized adult basic education, and within a timeframe that will allow them to improve in critical areas, enroll occupational skills training and obtain a credential.

#### *Industry Sectors/Pipeline Expansion*

The State is committed to increasing the pipeline of skilled workers in industry sectors vital to regional and state economic development. The State Workforce Plan encourages credential attainment in the areas of greatest economic demand. Local plans must identify local and regional industry sectors and target the high demand, high wage employers within those industries. Local plans should also outline specific industry sector and/or pipeline initiatives currently in place or anticipated.

#### *Labor Market Information*

Labor market information (LMI) provides real time analysis of local and regional markets, skills shortages, and employer needs. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) LMI offers regularly updated, comprehensive information related to unemployment statistics, labor force, industry, and demographics. This information is available organized by individual locality, as well as by LWIAs. Additionally, the VEC's Economic Information Services team is available to customize reports based on various needs of workforce system stakeholders. Local Plans should identify the process in place (or anticipated) for the continuous use of LMI to tailor efforts in localities and regions, based on real time data.

#### *Service Delivery Integration*

Integration of programs and services is integral to ensuring quality service delivery for Virginia Workforce Center customers. The State recently revised the Virginia Workforce Network partner agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); this document creates a common vision between partners and addresses integration, leveraging of resources, cost sharing, and collaboration. The MOU also addresses the framework for local MOUs, and the need for each LWIA to develop an integration process with workforce partners. Local plans must describe the local and regional process that addresses integration of services such as referral intake, application, and co-case management.

#### *Veteran's Workforce Services*

Priority of service is offered to Veterans in Virginia, with respect to any qualified Department of Labor-funded employment and job-training program. Veterans and Eligible Spouses are given priority over non-Veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services, notwithstanding any other provision of the law. The VEC provides employment and training services for Veterans, eligible persons, and Transitioning Service Members through the state Employment Service delivery system, and in cooperation with Virginia Workforce Center partners, through the utilization of federally-funded Local Veterans Employment Representative

(LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist (DVOP) staff. Additionally, each community college in Virginia maintains an Office of Veterans Affairs. This office provides information and applications for educational benefits to Veterans, reservists and eligible dependents. The Office also certifies students with confirmed VA eligibility who notify the college of their registration for classes. Local Plans should outline efforts for coordination with VEC, local Community Colleges and other partners as appropriate, in order to meet the workforce needs of Veterans and eligible spouses. Plans should identify and describe specific initiatives currently in place and those anticipated for implementation during the plan period.

### **Local Plan Contents and Process:**

The elements described below are required to be included in each local plan, in accordance with WIA Section 118.

#### *Contents*

The local plan shall include:

- Governance information that outlines:
  - how the WIB coordinates and interacts with Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO);
  - how the WIB meets its responsibilities for oversight, monitoring, and corrective action for WIA Title programs;
  - how the WIB conducts business in accordance with the Sunshine Provisions of WIA; and,
  - Staffing plans for the WIB.
- Labor Market Information that identifies:
  - the workforce investment needs of businesses, jobseekers, and workers in the local area;
  - the current and projected employment opportunities in the local area; and
  - the job skills necessary to obtain such employment opportunities.
- A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including:
  - the Virginia Workforce Center Operator for each site in the area;
  - physical locations of each comprehensive Virginia Workforce Center in the local area, and the co-location strategy for each center (current and planned);
  - if applicable, the locations of Virginia Workforce Network affiliated sites, partner sites or specialized centers;
  - services provided by each partner mandated by federal and state law, and other optional partners; and,
  - a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants.
- A description of the levels of performance to be used to measure the impact of the local area and to be used by the local board for evaluating the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers, and the one-stop delivery system;
- A description of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area, to include:

- universal access to core services;
- access to employment, training and supportive services;
- the area's definition of self-sufficiency to be used when determining eligibility for intensive and training services for employed individuals; and,
- the area's definition of hard-to-serve populations with additional barriers to employment.
- A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities, as appropriate;
- A description of services available to businesses, including small employers, self-employed individuals and other entrepreneurs;
- A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth activities in the local area, including:
  - the local area's strategy for ensuring the availability of comprehensive services for all youth;
  - how the area will identify and select successful providers of youth activities and delivery of the ten youth program elements required under WIA;
  - strategies to ensure that all eligible WIA youth receive work readiness and life skills activities during their enrollment in the WIA youth program;
  - strategies to identify, recruit and retain out-of-school youth, and efforts to ensure the required percent of WIA youth funds are expended on this population;
  - definition of youth in need of additional assistance and policy regarding serving youth who do not meet income eligibility guidelines;
  - efforts to coordinate with Job Corps, youth opportunity grants where applicable, registered apprenticeship programs, local offices on youth, and other youth services, including those administered through community colleges and other higher education institutions; and,
  - efforts taken to ensure compliance with applicable child labor and safety regulations.
- A description of professional staff development strategies to include:
  - process used to ensure that staff receive continuous training in workforce development practices;
  - methods to ensure effective use of the Virginia Workforce Connection system of record and to adhere to timely data entry requirements for WIA services;
  - process to measure staff performance and delivery of high-quality customer service; and,
  - process to meet and maintain staff certification and Virginia Workforce Center certification as required by Virginia Workforce Council Policy 10-01.
- A description of the fiscal and budgetary strategies used in the local area, to include:
  - identification of the entity/fiscal agent responsible for the disbursement of WIA funds, as determined by the chief elected official;
  - the methods and strategies used to ensure timely expenditure of WIA funds;
  - the competitive process to be used to award the grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIA; and,
  - the strategy used by the LWIB to leverage WIA funds with other Federal, State, local and philanthropic resources.

### *Attachments*

Please provide the following items as attachments to the plan, or include links to the document location:

- Current CLEO Consortium Agreement
- Current CLEO-LWIB Agreement
- Current WIB organizational chart (identify board oversight and program administration)
- Each memorandum of understanding between the local board and each of the one-stop partners concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area
- Eligible Training Provider Policy (including process to evaluate and recertify providers)
- Individual Training Account Policy
- On-the-Job Training Policy
- Customized Training Policy
- Priority of Service Policy
- Monitoring Policy (include monitoring tool and schedule)
- Equal Opportunity (EO) Policy - must include:
  - name and contact information for the EO Officer;
  - EO liaisons for each Virginia Workforce Center in the area, if different from the EO Officer);
  - description of efforts to ensure recruitment and hiring of staff will be done in a manner as to reflect the available workforce in the local and regional areas without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability status, political affiliation, and, for beneficiaries of WIA Title I services, citizenship or participation in a WIA Title I-funded program or activity; and,
  - process used to monitor and review the area's equal opportunity performance.
- Grievance Policy (related to participants, employees, vendors, and other parties, non-EO); and,
- A certification of the plan development process and approval of authorized local area representatives (see Attachment A of this VWL).

### *Process*

Prior to the date on which the local board submits a local plan under this section, the local board shall:

- Make available copies of the proposed local plan to the public through such means as public hearings and local news media;
- Allow members of the local board and members of the public, including representatives of business and representatives of labor organizations, to submit comments on the proposed local plan to the local board, not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date on which the proposed local plan is made available; and,
- Include with the local plan submitted any such comments received on the plan.

### **Submission Requirements:**

The state encourages local areas to engage in a collaborative planning process that moves beyond compliance to a strategic approach for the local and regional Virginia Workforce Network. In

order to allow local areas ample time to collaborate with a wide variety of workforce stakeholders, Local Plans for the 2012-2017 time period will be accepted for review between October 15, 2012 and April 15, 2013.

Local areas may submit a Local Plan electronically either by posting it on an Internet Website that is accessible to VCCS or by transmitting it through e-mail to VCCS. Areas choosing to post on a website should post the Local Plan and notify VCCS of its posting by sending an e-mail to [nthomas@vccs.edu](mailto:nthomas@vccs.edu). The e-mail must identify the URL for the Plan, provide contact information in the event of problems accessing the site, and certify that no changes will be made to the version posted on the Website after it has been submitted to VCCS. Areas submitting the Local Plan via e-mail should send it to the WIA Programs Administrator at [nthomas@vccs.edu](mailto:nthomas@vccs.edu). Plans submitted via e-mail must be in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Local Plan certifications with electronic signatures are acceptable.

The WIA Programs Administrator will confirm receipt of the Local Plan within two business days of receipt and indicate the date for the start of the review period. All local plans submitted By April 15, 2013 shall be considered to be approved at the end of the 90-day period beginning on the day the VCCS confirms receipt of the plan, unless a written determination during the 90-day period is made indicating:

- deficiencies in activities have been identified and the local area has not made acceptable progress in implementing corrective measures to address the deficiencies; or,
- the plan does not comply with the requirements as outlined in this guidance.

### **Tools and Resources:**

Resources can be found on the Virginia Workforce Network website: <http://vwn.vccs.edu/>. LWIBs can also take advantage of the information available at Workforce3one, an interactive knowledge sharing and learning platform, at [www.workforce3one.org](http://www.workforce3one.org). Additional technical assistance can be requested by contacting the WIA Programs Administrator.

### **Inquiries:**

Please submit inquiries regarding this VWL to the VCCS Office of Workforce Development Services:

*Workforce Investment Act Programs Administrator*

Najmah Thomas, PhD

James Monroe Building, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor

101 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street

Richmond, VA 23219

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Fax: (804) 819-1699

Email: [nthomas@vccs.edu](mailto:nthomas@vccs.edu)

**Attachment A: Statement of Compliance, Plan Signatures & Fiscal Agent Designation**

*We hereby certify that this local plan was developed in accordance with the State guidelines, and that local board activities will be conducted in accordance with this plan and the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, its attendant regulations and the applicable state laws and policies. We further certify that the plan was developed by the local workforce investment board in partnership with the local elected officials, and with the benefit of an open and inclusive plan development process and a public comment period.*

<b>Local Area Name / #</b>	
<b>Local Plan Point of Contact:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Phone/e-mail:</b>	

<b>Typed Name &amp; Signature of WIB Chair</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Typed Name &amp; Signature of CLEO Consortium Chair</b>	<b>Date</b>

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

Entity: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_