

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

VIRGINIA WORKFORCE LETTER (VWL) #11-04

TO: LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

FROM: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

SUBJECT: BUSINESS SERVICES MODEL

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2011

REVISION: AUGUST 12, 2013

Purpose:

To provide guidance to Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) on the Virginia Workforce Council's expectations for implementation of a business service model in all LWIAs in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

To provide an example of the "Business Easy Button" business service model.

References:

- [20 CFR 667](#)
- [ETA TEGL 13-07](#)
- [VWC Policy 10-01](#)
- [Workforce Investment Act of 1998](#)
- [WIA/WP Integrated State Plan – 2012-2017](#)

Background:

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 created a comprehensive workforce investment system that places major emphasis on the role of business in the workforce system. Businesses play a vital role in the structuring and implementation of the workforce system and they are one of the primary customers in the one-stop. Provision of services to businesses is value added to businesses, jobseeker customers, and the community. The workforce system should be coherent and easily accessible to business customers. Local Workforce Investment Areas should provide comprehensive services to businesses through the local workforce system. Full integration of business services in the workforce development system is necessary to have effective business services.

This VWL outlines the role of LWIAs and Virginia Workforce Centers in providing services to business customers. Specific examples of business service and related activities are provided. The VWL also describes four (4) qualities that should characterize the business service model in each LWIA, and presents additional actions required by WIBs in regard to implementation of a business service model.

Role of LWIAs and Virginia Workforce Centers in Providing Business Services:

Build Relationships with Business and Business-focused Organizations-

Relationship building is a key component of business services. It is important that business services staff build strong ongoing relationships with businesses and business focused organizations. Examples of relationship building activities include:

- Providing outreach to employers educating them on various services available to businesses through the Virginia Workforce Centers;
- Communicating regularly with existing business partners;
- Developing partnerships with business focused agencies (i.e. economic development, chambers of commerce, industry associations, small business administration, etc.);
- Participating on economic development boards; and,
- Facilitating regularly scheduled business focus groups.

Coordinate and Streamline Business Services by Virginia Workforce Center Partners-

Services offered to businesses should be streamlined and coordinated between Virginia Workforce Center partners. Businesses have indicated a clear preference for a single point of contact when working with the local workforce system. Coordinating services eliminates duplication of services to businesses. Examples of coordinating activities include:

- Developing a business services team that includes staff from all Workforce Center partners developing an integrated approach to business services;
- Providing a single point of contact for businesses;
- Developing and publicizing a unified business message;
- Implementing Career Pathways Models in the local workforce system; and,
- Conducting economic research that calculates collaborations between business entities (chambers of commerce/economic development) and the local workforce system to determine the local direct economic impact.

Act as an Informational Resource to Businesses-

Examples of informational resources include:

- State and/or federally generated labor market information;
- State and/or federally generated information on Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Information regarding consultations on workplace accommodations for persons with disabilities;
- Business start-up, retention and expansion services;
- Sources for developing customized training programs;
- Career preparation activities;

- Tax Credits; and,
- Federal Fidelity Bonding.

Assist Businesses in the Recruiting Process-

Assistance with recruiting will save businesses valuable time and resources and will directly impact Virginia Workforce Center customers through placement. Examples of recruitment assistance include:

- Assisting in finding qualified workers for businesses;
- Connecting to Labor exchange resources and systems;
- Providing interview facilities at Virginia Workforce Centers;
- Conducting position analysis and developing work skill descriptions;
- Assessing job applicants based on business developed criteria;
- Recruiting and screening applicants;
- Hosting and planning job fairs and recruiting events;
- Posting job openings in the Virginia Workforce Centers and at partner agency locations; and,
- Offering assessments for job candidates (i.e. CRC, TABE, etc.).

Assist Businesses with Addressing Training Needs-

The training components of the WIA-funded Adult and Dislocated worker programs and the comprehensive nature of one-stop partnerships allow the workforce system to offer business customers a connection to valuable training programs. Examples of connections to training include:

- Providing an inventory of education and training providers;
- Facilitating the referral and/or registration of businesses or their employees into training programs;
- Coordinating On-the-Job (OJT) training opportunities;
- Offering incumbent worker/customized training; and,
- Assisting business with layoff aversion/business retention project applications.

Provide Quality Individualized Services to Businesses-

Services offered to businesses must be tailored to meet their individualized needs. To offer tailored services, staff must communicate with businesses regularly and learn their needs. Business services staff should be knowledgeable of the industries they are serving and familiarize themselves with industry norms and practices. Staff should facilitate relationships and services in a business-like fashion, providing prompt and efficient services. Staff must also be flexible and accommodating when providing services to businesses.

Recommended Qualities of Business Service Models:

The Virginia Workforce Council's Performance and Accountability Committee recommends that the following four (4) qualities should characterize the business service model in each LWIA:

1. *The model includes a clear process for establishing a 'Single Point of Contact' for business customers;*

2. *The model (and information about available business services) is clear, convenient, and easily accessible by the business customer;*
3. *The model includes a specific requirement and definition for timely response to business customer requests; and,*
4. *The model ensures that a response to business customer inquiries includes alternative options, if the LWIA cannot provide an affirmative response to the business customer's initial request.*

Data Collection and Performance Requirements:

The Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC) is the State's system of record for tracking performance related WIA-funded activities and services. Currently, access to the business service module is limited to Wagner-Peyser merit staff (Virginia Employment Commission staff members). The VCCS has requested expanded access to this module for all Virginia Workforce Center staff members who have responsibilities for providing and tracking business services. Until expanded access is available to the Virginia Workforce Connection Business Services Module, services provided to business customers should be tracked using the Excel workbook template, which is attached to this VWL.

Benchmarking data for business services will be collected between the period of September 2013 and February 2014. This information will be compiled and presented to the Virginia Workforce Council for consideration at the April 2014 meeting. Requirements for business service performance may be determined by the Council in the future.

Action Required:

Many LWIAs currently have a business service model, or have plans to establish a business service team in partnership with Virginia Workforce Center partner representatives. All local WIBs should review the examples of potential activities, partnerships, and critical program elements for business customer services, and ensure that the recommended qualities are evident, documented, and practiced in the delivery of services to business customers. Local WIBs should also review the data collection template and instructions, and begin collecting the required data elements for business services provided by Virginia Workforce Center partners. This does not include collection of data that is already reported in the VaWC by Wagner-Peyser merit staff.

Resources:

Business Services Network

The VCCS currently facilitates a Business Services Network to establish communication and provide technical support to Virginia Workforce Center staff members with business service responsibilities (including business service team members). The Business Services Network hosts regular meetings and conference calls, business service training (for all practitioners regardless of agency), group professional development on the use of social media tools to serve business needs, and an online repository of information and resources. The network also promotes sharing of promising practices and a consistent approach to serving businesses. The Business Services Network is currently managed by the Virginia Workforce Center Statewide Coordinator.

Business Service Capacity Building Grants

The VCCS, in its role as WIA program administrator, intends to make funding available to LWIAs to support the strategic planning and implementation of revitalized or enhanced business engagement activities within the state. LWIAs participating in the initiative will focus on improving program performance through the delivery of enhanced business-focused services. This effort is aligned with the goal of enhancing services to business, as outlined in the Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Integrated State Plan. The initial round of funding will be announced in September 2013.

“Business Easy Button” Example:

The [Shenandoah Valley Local Workforce Investment Area](#) currently operates a Business Easy Button (BEB) concept as its business service model. Based on the BEB concept there is a philosophy that the employer is the customer and the function is supported by the establishment of guidelines for working with employers. Guidelines may include but are not limited to employer response requirements, employer friendly forms and processes, employer resolution requirements, employer surveys, and a continuous improvement process.

At the local level Business Services Teams work with employers to provide services for recruiting, training, retention, reduction in force (RIF)/Rapid Response, and information and research:

- Local areas may provide some recruiting services which may include but are not limited to job postings, on-site/off-site recruiting events, job fair assistance, applicant screening, job developments, and interview assistance.
- Training services may include but are not limited to incumbent worker, on-the-job training, work experience, customized training, and employer training workshops.
- Retention services may include but are not limited to turnover and retention research, on-site assessment, retention based tax incentives, and layoff aversion strategies.
- RIF/Rapid Response services may include but are not limited to workshops, briefings, placement assistance, and out sourced staff.
- Information and research services may include but are not limited to wage surveys, labor projections, training research, and talent pipeline identification.

Inquiries:

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

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Attachments:

Business Measures Data Collection Template and Process

VWC BUSINESS MEASURES DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Purpose: To capture basic information on the services local workforce investment areas provide to businesses in their communities. This data collection process should reflect services provided from September 1, 2013 through February 28, 2014.

Process: The VWC Business Services Data Collection (Excel spreadsheet) contains three tabs.

1. Business Measures Definitions – defines data elements to be captured. This list has been reduced from the original business measure data collection elements.
2. VWC Business Measure – actual data is collected in this tab. Enter the number of services provided for each employer in the appropriate column.
3. Supplemental Narrative – add any additional information that will further explain the local areas services to businesses.

Under the VWC Business Measures tab, enter the Business name and the service or services provided to that business. We are only looking at counts of services provided. Use the definitions under the Business Measure Definitions to assist in the collection of this information.

Due date: We will need to review the data collected for the first month (9/1/2013 to 9/30/2013) to assess the data collection process. Please submit the results of the first month no later than **10/11/2013** to WDSREPORTS@VCCS.EDU. The file label should include your LWIA number and the VWC Business Measures Data when submitting. We will review the data being collected and will notify all if there are changes.

The final file will be submitted to WDSREPORTS@VCCS.EDU no later than **3/15/2014**.

For additional questions, please contact Joe Holicky (jholicky@vccs.edu).

