



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

**The Virginia Community College System
VIRGINIA WORKFORCE LETTER (VWL) No. 17-03**

TO: Local Workforce Development Boards

FROM: George Taratsas
Administrator, Federal Workforce Programs

SUBJECT: Virginia Career Works Brand Implementation Funding Opportunity Guidance

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 16, 2018

PURPOSE:

This Virginia Workforce Letter provides guidelines to Virginia Career Works Regions and Partners for the statewide implementation and application of the *Virginia Career Works* unified brand, which unites workforce system delivery under the One-Stop Career Centers and promotes quality, consistent services across the entire Commonwealth.

The establishment of a unified brand for the Virginia workforce and one-stop delivery system leverages the collective strength of partners and enhances customer awareness and use of vital employment and training services. This leveraging provides greater clarity and consistency about the Virginia workforce development system's mission and role, as well as its contribution to supporting Virginia's economy.

REFERENCES:

Virginia Career Works Policy 300-07, *One-Stop System Brand*, Approved March 22, 2018

DEFINITIONS:

Brand—A brand is represented by visual assets or creative expressions such as a name, logo and colors, and reflects a powerful (and ideally positive) connection to customers, stakeholders and the public at-large because its value is defined in the minds of these audiences and is based on their experiences and perceptions.

Virginia Career Works Brand—The Virginia Career Works brand refers to the unified identity of the Virginia workforce and one-stop system and is represented by commonly aligned brand names and logos applying to the statewide workforce partners, workforce development regions, and One-Stop Career Centers.

BACKGROUND:

The Virginia workforce system is comprised of 24 different programs and initiatives administered by eight state agencies from three different cabinet secretariats. The programs under the four titles of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are administered by five separate state agencies. Additionally, Virginia has fifteen local workforce areas that coordinate and provide workforce services through a network of One Stop Career Centers.

To gauge opinions about the Virginia workforce system, the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) L. Douglas Wilder School of Public Policy conducted a poll that found the following:

“Despite support for workforce training and development, over half of those surveyed (57%) said they were not familiar with job and career opportunities in their community. More concerning is that 80% of those with less than a high school diploma are unfamiliar with the education and training opportunities in their community. Just over 70 percent (72%) were not familiar with the state’s One-Stop Career Centers, which give Virginians access to the resources needed to search for jobs and improve their professional employment skills.”

To improve customers’ exposure and understanding of the Virginia workforce system, two major brand efforts were attempted in the past 15 years—the last being creation of the “ElevateVirginia” brand in 2013. However, neither of these brand implementation efforts utilized an in-depth, research-based process as part of development of the brand.

Customers of Virginia’s workforce system are often confused about where and how to obtain the services they need, and the present structure of the workforce system is difficult for many job seekers and businesses to navigate. To combat this problem, in May 2017, the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) procured a team of workforce and brand experts (Brand Development Team) to launch a comprehensive development process to come up with a new, unified brand for the Virginia workforce system. The goals of the effort include the following:

- The brand clearly communicates the value delivered by Virginia’s state workforce system to two key customer groups – individual job seekers and businesses.
- The brand is simple, memorable, and original.
- The brand embodies the vision established by Virginia’s workforce system.
- The brand supports the achievement of the system’s primary goals and strategies.

To ensure the brand initiative resulted in customer-focused and market-driven decisions throughout brand development process, a series of focus groups was held throughout Virginia and involved employer and job seeker customers, system stakeholders and partners, and economic and education officials. A daylong system stakeholder workshop was held in July 2017 to gain feedback on perceptions and realities of the Virginia workforce system and provide a “voice” for the Brand Development Team to begin brand conceptual development. After the focus groups and workshop, the Virginia Brand Executive Leadership

Team developed a Brand Charter that embodied key components of the brand, such as the Mission and Vision of the Virginia workforce system, the “Brand Promise,” and the “Brand Values.” Finally, the Brand Development Team developed six marks and six names for testing in the market. To gain valuable research on marks and names, a total of 100 Virginia employers (with responsibility for hiring) and 350 residents (representing a mix of job seekers, underemployed and gainfully employed residents) completed an online survey during the period of November 21-30, 2017. Based on the results of the survey, a recommendation on a name and mark was presented to the Executive Leadership, which approved and forwarded it to the Governor’s office for public rollout.

GUIDANCE:

Naming Structure

The naming structure or brand architecture for Virginia’s workforce system is as follows:

Virginia Career Works is the master brand. It refers to the Virginia workforce and one-stop system in its entirety.



Each region of the Virginia workforce and one-stop system will be referred to as Virginia Career Works followed by a geographic locator. One-Stop Career Centers will be referred to as Virginia Career Works followed by a geographic locator and the word “Center.”

Use of the brand by regions, boards, partners, and One-Stop Centers will be specifically bound by the directions prescribed in the *Virginia Career Works Brand Standards Manual* found at <https://brand.virginiacareerworks.com/login/>.

Brand Implementation

The rollout of the Virginia Career Works brand on January 8, 2018, marked the beginning of a roughly nine-month transition to full implementation no later than September 3, 2018. This transition provides an opportunity for workforce development boards, workforce system partners, and workforce system providers to appropriately move toward full usage of the Virginia Career Works brand.

Use of the Virginia Career Works brand is guided by the Brand Implementation Plan, the Brand Standards Manual, and the online Brand Asset Portal. Each of these resources provides instructions, templates, and other materials needed to effectively and consistently implement the brand statewide.

Using these resources, each Virginia workforce region shall have all signage, collateral materials, outreach materials, and online web pages fully branded with the Virginia Career Works brand no later than September 3, 2018. Each Virginia workforce region must use this brand implementation period to deplete their current supplies of outreach collaterals and office stationary, including business cards with their current names and logos, with a full phase-out and discontinued use of these materials no later than September 3, 2018.

American Job Center Network

The U.S. Department of Labor, in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 36-11, announced the American Job Center Network national unifying brand and strongly encouraged, but did not require, its adoption by state and local workforce investment boards. Since that time, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 16-16 use of the American Job Center Network brand is mandatory. Integration of that national brand into state and regional brand strategies is addressed in the Virginia Career Works Brand Standards Manual.

Implementation Funding

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has state WIOA Title I funds available to assist Virginia workforce regions with the costs of implementing the Virginia Career Works brand. Each region will receive a grant award of up to \$25,000 upon submission of a Brand Implementation Plan identifying the costs of implementing the new brand, to include proposed activities for use of the funds and a line item budget. VCCS has reserved \$85,000 of WIOA Title I funds to support a second phase of brand implementation activities as necessary.

The grant awards will be issued on a reimbursable basis.

The performance period will be April 1, 2018 through September 3, 2018.

The implementation plan, which will also serve as the application for funding, must include signatures of the local Workforce Development Board Chair and local workforce development area WIOA Title I Grant Recipient. It shall also include the name of the local workforce development area and name and title of the appropriate individual as contact information.

The submission deadline is May 4, 2018. VCCS will issue awards by May 18, 2018.

Development of Regional Brand Implementation Plan

Each local workforce development board, in consultation with Chief Elected Officials and workforce development system partners, must submit a Regional Brand Implementation Plan to the VCCS to receive funding in support of the implementation activities. The plan does not have to comply with any specific format but should use the Virginia Career Works Brand Implementation Plan as a guide and must address the following components:

- ✓ An overview that must include at a minimum: any required legal transition steps; stakeholder brand transition communication strategies; internal brand orientation steps; a proposed local media launch event; collateral and signage transition; website transition; and any proposed social media outreach.
- ✓ A timeline of the key tasks.

Funds available through this VWL must be used to address costs such as exterior and interior signage replacement, redesign of public outreach and informational materials to conform to the new brand, website changes to conform to the new brand, changes to business stationary and other implementation costs in adherence with federal and state guidelines. All proposed funding activities must be itemized in the line item budget submission.

Local Workforce Development Boards are encouraged to identify opportunities to partner across workforce development areas to maximize opportunities for cooperation, implementation efficiencies, and cost savings.

Procurement and Cost Allowability

All purchases made to implement the Virginia Career Works brand must comply with the state guidance and the local workforce development board's approved procurement policies and procedures. Purchases must also comply with the applicable Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Guidance that establishes principles and standards for determining allowable activities and costs for federal awards carried out through grants, cost reimbursement contracts, and other agreements.

VCCS will provide Expenditure Reimbursement and activity reporting forms and instructions with the issuance of awards.

ACTION REQUIRED:

The Brand Implementation Plan, to include a line item budget, shall be submitted to the WIOA Title I Administrator via e-mail at WIOA@vccs.edu by close of business May 4, 2018.

INQUIRIES:

Please submit inquiries regarding this VWL to: WIOA@vccs.edu