

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT LOCAL PLAN DRAFT

VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS BLUE RIDGE REGION

SUBMITTED BY

WESTERN VIRGINIA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD
and the
CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS
CONSORTIUM

JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2024

*Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke
Cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem*

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Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

A descriptive analysis of the regional economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)]

The Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge region is diverse with a mix of urban and rural localities including the Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke and the Cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem. The total population for the region, based on July 1, 2020 population estimates is 309,517¹. Total employment for the region is at 162,686, with a significant majority of individuals employed in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector. The Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services, and Educational Services sectors round out the top five (5) industries.² Table 1 below shows the top ten (10) sectors for total employment in the Blue Ridge region.

Table 1 – Total Employment by Sector³

NAICS	Industry	2015 Employ	2020 Employ	% Change
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	27,607	28,596	0.7%
44	Retail Trade	19,611	17,582	-2.2%
31	Manufacturing	17,362	16,469	-1.1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	13,403	12,065	-2.1%
61	Educational Services	11,946	11,609	-0.6%
23	Construction	10,632	10,675	0.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	9,338	8,778	-1.2%
56	Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	9,529	8,392	-2.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	8,251	8,289	0.1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	8,919	7,994	-2.2%

Another important aspect to note is the Location Quotient of the industries within the Blue Ridge region. Location Quotient is used to identify industries and/or occupations that are unique and specialized within the region compared to the national average. Location Quotient values of 1.0 suggest that the concentration of an industry or sector is typical of all regions in the nation and indicate that local production meets the local demand for goods or services. Location Quotient values exceeding 1.2 suggest that a region is specialized in a particular industry or sector, while Location Quotient values less than 0.8 suggests that a region relies on other regions to meet local demand. The highest Location Quotient recorded in the region with a value of 1.87 is Management of Companies and Enterprises. This industry is defined as establishments that administer, oversee, and manage the securities of the company or enterprise. These would informally be known as headquarter operations. The rest of the top ten (10) industries by Location Quotient can be found in Table 2.

¹ Weldon Cooper Center Population Estimates, July 2020, www.coopercenter.org

² JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry & Employment Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, March 2021

³ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry & Employment Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, March 2021

Table 2 – Top Sectors by Location Quotient⁴

NAICS	Industry Sector	Location Quotient
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.87
31	Manufacturing	1.23
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1.19
42	Wholesale Trade	1.14
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1.14
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.13
23	Construction	1.12
44	Retail Trade	1.05
72	Accommodation and Food Services	0.92
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.88

The last statistic that is important to analyze is the Employment Outlook by industry for the Blue Ridge Region. This data shows the highest demand in terms of job growth for the region by industry and notes the total demand which includes number of retirements or separations from the industry as well as the number of new jobs that are anticipated to be created over the next five (5) years. Table 3 shows the top ten (10) industry sectors for total demand for employment over the next five (5) years.

Table 3 – Top Sector by Employment Outlook⁵

NAICS	Industry Sector	Exits	Transfer	Growth	Total Demand
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	6,681	6,907	650	14,238
44	Retail Trade	5,074	6,411	-765	10,719
72	Accommodation & Food Services	4,320	5,441	50	9,811
31	Manufacturing	3,079	5,272	-877	7,475
61	Educational Services	2,560	2,762	-176	5,146
23	Construction	1,866	3,338	-104	5,099
56	Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	2,042	2,786	-14	4,814
48	Transportation & Warehousing	1,971	2,667	-120	4,518
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,071	2,472	-29	4,514
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1,330	2,252	231	3,813

Table 4 below is another way to look at the employment outlook for the industries in the region based on the annual growth percentage.

⁴ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry & Employment Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, March 2021

⁵ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry & Employment Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, March 2021

Table 4 – Top Sectors by Annual Growth %⁶

NAICS	Industry Sector	Total Demand	Annual Growth %
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,820	0.6%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,813	0.6%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	14,238	0.5%
72	Accommodation & Food Services	9,811	0.1%
55	Management of Companies & Enterprises	2,092	0.0%
56	Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	4,814	0.0%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,514	-0.1%
23	Construction	5,099	-0.2%
48	Transportation & Warehousing	4,518	-0.2%
61	Educational Services	5,146	-0.3%

Based on the analysis of the above data tables and employer need, the following sectors have been identified as the Existing Target Sectors for the Blue Ridge region:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Educational Services
- Construction

The following industries have been classified as Emerging Target Sectors and, while they may not be at the forefront of all activities related to workforce development, serve a purpose in being acknowledged to ensure that employment demand is met.

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Health Care and Social Assistance

The Health Care and Social Assistance industry is one of the most critical industries for the regional economy and is important for the workforce development system to support to meet employment demand. With a total demand of 14,238 noted above for the next five (5) years, and with a total employment currently of 28,596, there is a demonstrated need for workforce funding to support the training and development of skilled workers for this industry. In the Blue Ridge region, the industry is made up of two sub-sectors of institutions: the first being the clinical and acute care facilities supported by Carilion Clinic and HCA Healthcare (Lewis Gale Health System) and the second being long-term healthcare facilities. While there is some overlap within these two subsectors, the employment needs do differ, especially within the clinical nursing staff. The break down of employment in the industry is shown in Table 5 below.

⁶ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry & Employment Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, March 2021

Table 5 – Health Care and Social Assistance Industry Snapshot⁷

NAICS	Industry	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand	Ann % Growth
622	Hospitals	11,375	\$74,636	838	-0.3%
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	7,916	\$59,575	765	1.0%
623	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5,528	\$35,965	627	0.2%
624	Social Assistance	3,777	\$26,072	520	1.7%

Nursing and clinical staff are represented heavily in the top in-demand occupations within the Health Care and Social Assistance industry. Table 6 represents the top ten (10) in-demand occupations within the industry.

Table 6 – Occupation Distribution for Health Care and Social Assistance⁸

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
29-1141	Registered Nurses	4,318	\$65,000	224
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	2,770	\$25,800	303
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	1,957	\$21,300	340
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,065	\$44,000	82
31-9092	Medical Assistants	697	\$31,800	88
31-1121	Home Health Aides	685	\$21,300	99
43-4171	Receptionists & Information Clerks	590	\$29,100	82
43-6013	Medical Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	496	\$38,000	56
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, & Mental Health Counselors	452	\$44,800	59
39-9011	Childcare Workers	438	\$19,900	63

Manufacturing

The Manufacturing industry in the region is diverse with several large manufacturers contributing to high numbers of employment in the region. With a total employment of 17,362 and 7,475 jobs that will be available in the next five (5) years, the demand for this industry is deceiving due to the lack of annual growth projected. Large manufacturers in the region such as WestRock, Mack Trucks, Double Envelope, Trivium Packaging, Plygem Windows, Marvin Windows, Cardinal Glass, and more are facing the “silver tsunami” in the future. This term has been created due to the large number of individuals that are within five (5) years of retirement. While these are not new jobs that are coming to the region, they will need to be replaced to ensure the continued success of these manufacturers. A large knowledge transfer will need to take place as well as a massive effort to build the talent pipeline for this industry, as youth and young adults continue to lean away from these technical, hands-on careers opportunities. Table 7 shows the Occupation Distribution for the Manufacturing industry and the occupations that will need to be supported to ensure the job demand is met.

⁷ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry & Employment Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, March 2021

⁸ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Health Care and Social Assistance, March 2021

Table 7 – Occupation Distribution for Manufacturing⁹

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
51-2092	Team Assemblers	1,382	\$33,800	118
21-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	609	\$60,700	55
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	598	\$45,900	54
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	488	\$30,000	62
51-7042	Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	392	\$28,200	49
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	386	\$40,400	33
21-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	362	\$33,400	38
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	361	\$49,100	38
51-4041	Machinists	330	\$45,600	33
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical & Scientific Products	329	\$69,300	30

Transportation and Warehousing

Transportation and Warehousing is another key industry for the Blue Ridge region with several employers located in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands that support this industry and the regional economy. The total employment for the industry is reported as 8,778 with large employers such as FedEx, UPS, Lawrence Transportation, Garten Trucking, and more. The demand for this industry comes from the location of the region on the Western side of Virginia along the Interstate 81 corridor. This major Interstate runs the length of the East Coast and is known for its traffic related to transportation and distribution vehicles. Because of this, individuals who seek employment in this industry do not have trouble finding work and are typically not at risk for reductions in force. The other subsector of the Transportation industry is related to City Transit and mass transit operations. The City of Roanoke has a large transit system in partnership with Valley Metro as well as an Amtrak stop in Downtown Roanoke that provides other transportation options for individuals. The Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport also provides employment opportunities within the transportation sector, with major airlines employing individuals to handle baggage, ticket sales, and other logistical operations for the airport. Table 8 below shows the occupations that are most in demand for the Transportation and Warehousing industry.

⁹ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Manufacturing, March 2021

Table 8 – Occupation Distribution for Transportation and Warehousing¹⁰

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,839	\$44,400	205
53-7062	Laborers & Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,249	\$30,200	179
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	573	\$48,200	70
43-5052	Postal Service Mail Carriers	492	\$51,400	23
53-3058	Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	342	\$29,700	44
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operations	307	\$33,800	34
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors.	256	\$59,600	28
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	254	\$29,000	34
49-3031	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	150	\$45,500	14
43-5032	Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire & Ambulance	135	\$52,200	12

Educational Services

The Educational Services industry continues to be a large supplier of employment opportunities in the region, particularly in the more rural counties. For all the localities in the region, the public-school systems are one of the top employers and provide a variety of employment opportunities. With the COVID-19 global pandemic and the increased workload on the teachers and educators in the region, many have chosen to leave the industry and seek other avenues of employment. It is expected that there will be many vacancies to fill after the 2020-2021 school year. Table 9 below shows the occupational distribution for Education Services.

¹⁰ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Transportation and Warehousing, March 2021

Table 9 – Occupation Distribution for Educational Services¹¹

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	941	\$55,300	61
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	767	\$22,800	82
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	624	\$56,300	43
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	352	\$31,000	45
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	335	\$56,600	37
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	265	\$25,200	23
53-3058	Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	257	\$26,800	19
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	237	\$36,100	25
11-9032	Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary	210	\$79,300	22
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	197	\$32,000	22

Construction

The Construction industry is a prominent sector in the region that is not only recognized as industry alone, but also has many occupations within the industry that support other target sectors, such as Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing. Some of the major employers within the region include Lionberger Construction, F&S Building Innovations, G&H Contracting, GJ Hopkins, Avis Construction, and Adams Construction Company. With a total employment of 10,675, that grew slightly over the last five (5) years, it is anticipated that this will continue to be an area of focus for the workforce development system. Also, with the efforts focused on the repair and expansion of Interstate 81, the demand will only increase. Some private businesses have become involved heavily with workforce development efforts in the region due to the lack of talent available for large contracts. Some of these businesses have even formed their own training programs, such as the [Build Smart Institute](#) that was created by F&S Building Innovations, to skill-up and train talent in large numbers. Table 10 shows the top occupations within the Construction industry for the region.

Table 10 – Occupation Distribution for Construction¹²

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,310	\$28,000	144
47-2031	Carpenters	819	\$39,800	78
47-2111	Electricians	791	\$50,300	98
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	740	\$59,900	76
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	511	\$44,400	56
47-2073	Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	431	\$39,000	49

¹¹ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Educational Services, March 2021

¹² JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Construction, March 2021

49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	397	\$41,000	38
11-9021	Construction Managers	380	\$95,800	29
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	316	\$35,100	33
47-2141	Painters, Construction & Maintenance	282	\$33,000	27

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services is a new emerging industry for the region that has recently risen in prominence due to the number of headquarters and technical operations that are expanding or relocating to the region. With a total employment of 8,251, there are many businesses in the region who have sited challenges with recruiting skilled workers into available occupations. Like the Construction industry, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry is not independent in the region, but also supports most other industries present in the region. Large employers in other industries such as Carilion Clinic, HCA Healthcare (Lewis Gale Health System), public school systems, Lionberger Construction, and Lawrence Transportation rely on occupations within the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry to perform critical functions for their operations. This industry is also a huge focus for the regional economic development organizations, as the region becomes known for the Innovation Corridor which encompasses several research and information facilities related to Carilion Clinic and the Virginia Tech Carilion Medical School. Table 11 below shows the top occupations in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services in the Blue Ridge region.

Table 11 – Occupation Distribution for Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services¹³

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
15-1256	Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analysts & Testers	756	\$97,600	77
23-1011	Lawyers	425	\$101,100	18
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	422	\$74,700	37
13-1111	Management Analysts	328	\$98,400	34
23-2011	Paralegals & Legal Assistants	269	\$41,100	29
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	264	\$86,600	24
11-9198	Personal Service Managers, All Other; Entertainment & Recreation Managers, Except Gambling; and Managers, All Other	231	\$90,400	15
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	200	\$52,100	21
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	179	\$33,800	20
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks	174	\$39,100	18

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry is a new emerging industry for the Blue Ridge region since previous strategic and local plans. Tourism and outdoor lifestyle activities are becoming more and more prominent throughout the region, with a large emphasis on outdoor and lifestyle amenities to attract talent and for purposes of economic development. The Roanoke Regional Partnership, the regional economic development entity for the Blue Ridge region, developed Roanoke Outside in 2013 to showcase the region as one of the best outdoor communities in the United States. This effort has grown over the past 8 years and has brought

¹³ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, March 2021

several large events and achievements to the region, including the Blue Ridge Marathon and Roanoke GO Fest. Virginia’s Blue Ridge and the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism have also played large roles in promoting the region through a tourism lens to showcase the plethora of outdoor and lifestyle activities which make the region a great place to call home. Another addition to this industry has been related to the Commonwealth of Virginia authorizing off-track betting facilities. This led to the establishment of Rosie’s Gaming Emporium in Roanoke County in 2019. The facility has led to an increase in revenue for the County and has already announced a large expansion to accommodate growth.

In 2020, the total employment of this industry was 2,458 with a total demand of 1,820 jobs over the next five (5) years.¹⁴ Table 18 below shows the top occupations for the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry for the region.

Table 18 – Occupation Distribution for Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation¹⁵

SOC	Occupation	Total Employ	Avg Ann Wages	Total Demand
39-9031	Exercise Trainers & Group Fitness Instructors	294	\$31,200	54
39-3091	Amusement & Recreation Attendants	243	\$22,100	59
37-3011	Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	129	\$25,000	18
35-3031	Waiters & Waitresses	92	\$20,600	19
27-2022	Coaches & Scouts	88	\$47,100	14
43-4171	Receptionists & Information Clerks	69	\$22,900	9
39-9032	Recreation Workers	67	\$26,600	12
27-2042	Musicians & Singers	64	\$48,900	7
27-3043	Writers & Authors	57	\$76,500	5
39-9011	Childcare Workers	56	\$18,700	9

A descriptive analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)]

The presence of COVID-19 has significantly impacted the job market for the Roanoke Valley and the Alleghany Highlands, particularly during 2020 as the region faced required shutdowns and social distancing requirements that businesses were mandated to follow. In 2020, a total of 52,462 jobs were posted in the region, with a breakdown shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19 – Job Postings by Occupation: January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020¹⁶

SOC	Occupation	Total Ads
41-2031	Retail Salesperson	3,933
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,525
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,028
53,3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,824
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,461
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,460
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,278

¹⁴ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Industry Snapshot: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, December 2020

¹⁵ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Occupation Distribution: Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, March 2021

¹⁶ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Jobs RTI Report, March 2021

21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	1,182
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,132
37-2011	Janitors, Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	970

These job postings directly reflect needs during the COVID-19 global pandemic, as there was a large migration of individuals leaving the retail environment due to fears of the virus, as well as the need for more medical professionals to assist with treating patients who contract the virus. There was also an increase in the need for logistics and essential workers in the food service industry, which is reflected in the job postings for 2020. Job posting data for 2019 shows a total number of jobs posted as 57,965, which is only slightly higher than the numbers for 2020.

Based on job postings, the top credentials that have been noted as required are shown in Table 20.

Table 20 – Certifications Required – Job Postings¹⁷

Certificate Name	Total Ads Mentioned
Basic Life Support (BLS)	1,796
Registered Nurse Certification	1,586
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	817
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	669
Class A Commercial Driver’s License	617
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	526
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	474
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	349
First Aid Certification	345

This data confirms the consensus around the region that the Health Care and Social Assistance industry is very reliant on industry-recognized certifications for hiring new employees, as there are direct competencies that have been tied to certifications to ensure new hires have the skills needed to be successful. Class A Commercial Driver’s Licenses are also one of the most in-demand industry-recognized credentials, which directly correlated with one of the region’s target sectors being Transportation and Warehousing. Many of the other industries, including the Manufacturing and Construction industry, have been vocal about the need for workers who have excellent soft skills and general interest in the industry instead of relying on industry-recognized credentials for employment purposes. The Manufacturing industry has been difficult to engage in the competency evaluation to match up to industry-recognized credentials. Many employers in the region provide extensive hands-on training which results in opportunities for On-the-Job Training services rather than formal curriculum-based education. Registered Apprenticeships have also become widely used by the Manufacturing and Construction industries and a great partnership has been formed with the local K-12 public schools and industry partners to provide these opportunities to youth in high school. Many have gone on to graduate high school and become employed with these industry partners while they continue their education either formally with continued higher education or informally with hands-on training and related instruction by the business.

¹⁷ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Certifications by Job Posting, March 2021

An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)]

Prior to PY2020, the region had experienced consistent economic growth since the Great Recession with numerous businesses relocating and/or expanding in the region. With the development of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March of 2020, unfortunately, the economic growth that had occurred was reversed entirely. Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, the total employment for the region declined 8.8% due to the global pandemic.¹⁸ The unemployment rate peaked for the region during the pandemic in April 2020 with a rate of 10.6%, higher than the unemployment rate at any period during the Great Recession, with over 17,000 individuals unemployed.¹⁹ The labor force participation in the region has been slowly declining over the last 10 years, which began with a value of 63.4% in 2020 and fell to 60.3% in 2019²⁰.

The population of the Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge region, like the localities, is also diverse and represents a wide range of individuals with varying demographics. With slow projected annual growth (0.1%²¹ annual growth reported – below the state and national average of 0.7%), the workforce development system in partnership with economic development partners in the region is focused on both talent attraction and talent retention as strategies to fill the talent pipeline for the region’s businesses. Table 21 below shows key demographics of the population of the region.

Table 21 – Demographics: Blue Ridge Region

Gender	Blue Ridge	Virginia	USA
Male	48.1%	49.2%	49.2%
Female	51.9%	50.8%	50.8%

Age	Blue Ridge	Virginia	USA
Under 18 Years	20.3%	22.1%	22.6%
18 to 24 Years	8.1%	9.6%	9.4%
25 to 34 Years	12.2%	13.9%	13.9%
35 to 44 Years	11.5%	13.0%	12.6%
45 to 54 Years	13.6%	13.5%	13.0%
55 to 64 Years	14.4%	12.9%	12.9%
65 to 74 Years	11.6%	9.0%	9.1%
75 Years+	8.3%	6.1%	6.5%

Race	Blue Ridge	Virginia	USA
White	81.4%	67.6%	72.5%
Black or African American	12.8%	19.2%	12.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%
Asian	2.1%	6.4%	5.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Hispanic or Latino	3.7%	9.4%	18.0%

¹⁸ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Economic Overview: Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Region, December 2020

¹⁹ Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Virginia Employment Commission, www.virginiaworks.com, December 2020

²⁰ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Demographic Report, March 2021

²¹ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Demographic Report, March 2021

Veterans	Blue Ridge	Virginia	USA
Age 18-64	5.4%	8.1%	4.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	74.3%	83.0%	76.6%

The educational levels of individuals in the region are heavily weighted to individuals who have a high school diploma and some college, with a small percentage of individuals who have not completed high school or high school equivalency tests. While there are several higher education institutions within a 60-mile radius of the region, including Virginia Tech, Radford University, Roanoke College, Hollins University, Liberty University, and Ferrum College, many of the individuals do not remain in the region after graduation, perpetuating the “brain drain” of skilled individuals. Table 22 below shows the educational attainment levels of the region as compared to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States.

Table 22 – Educational Attainment: Blue Ridge Region

Educational Level	Blue Ridge	Virginia	USA
No High School Diploma	8.5%	8.7%	10.9%
High School Graduate	30.9%	22.9%	25.7%
Some College, No Degree	20.5%	19.4%	20.7%
Associate’s Degree	11.9%	8.3%	9.1%
Bachelor’s Degree	18.1%	23.6%	21.2%
Postgraduate Degree	10.1%	17.1%	12.3%

Commuting patterns for the region have changed over the years, as Roanoke remains the largest urban city west of Richmond in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As the City of Roanoke continues to grow, the suburban areas of Roanoke also become larger and expanding to other surrounding counties such as Bedford County, Montgomery County, the Martinsville/Danville area, and even as far as West Virginia.

Table 23 - Commuting Patterns²²

Pattern	Total
People who live and work in the area	109,949
In-Commuters	56,985
Out-Commuters	34,936
Net In-Commuters	22,049

There are several specific demographics related to the population of the Blue Ridge region that are relevant to the activities of the workforce development system. These demographics relate to challenges or barriers that may be encountered by individuals in the region when reaching their employment and/or educational goals. The first is the level of poverty in the region, which is higher than the poverty level of the Commonwealth of Virginia and nearly equal to the total poverty of the United States. The total poverty level for the region is 13.2%, with Virginia’s level at 10.6% and the United States’ level at 13.4%²³. Table 24 below details other key demographics related to potential challenges or barriers to employment. These demographics continue to be analyzed on a regular basis to ensure that gaps in services to these populations are being addressed.

²² Community Profile, Virginia Employment Commission, www.virginiaworks.com, March 2021

²³ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Demographic Profile, March 2021

Table 24 – Social Demographics Related to Barriers to Employment²⁴

Social Attribute	Blue Ridge	Virginia	USA
Poverty Level (Total)	13.2%	10.6%	13.4%
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	10.5%	8.2%	11.7%
Disconnected Youth	3.0%	1.5%	2.5%
Children in Single Parent Families	37.6%	31.0%	34.1%
Uninsured	7.7%	8.6%	8.8%
With a Disability, Age 18-64	10.5%	9.5%	10.3%
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate & Size	33.2%	45.0%	42.2%
Foreign Born	4.6%	12.4%	13.6%
Speak English Less Than Very Well	2.0%	5.9%	8.4%

An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)]

The activities of the workforce development system in the Blue Ridge region are focused on providing a skilled and talented workforce that meets our current and future employment demand for businesses. To meet this goal, not only are the demographics of the region analyzed on an annual basis, but collaboration and coordination between the entities of the workforce development system is critical to meeting this goal while being efficient and effective. The Blue Ridge region acknowledges that many individuals in the region are High School Graduates and need further education or credentials to not only gain self-sufficient employment, but also to continue movement up the career pathway within their industry of choice. Educational partners have become more flexible to address changing needs, particularly with the continued increase in technology skills needed for occupations in the target sectors. Customized training can be developed, along with integrated education and training, to quickly meet the needs of the business for talent while assisting individuals who may have barriers to employment. The Business Solutions Teams in the region, one for the Roanoke Valley and the second for the Alleghany Highlands, consist of all partner entities and economic development organizations and use their time together to discuss current and upcoming business needs and hearing from businesses directly regarding skill requirements to gain employment. This information is shared with all partners through their individual representatives on the Business Solutions Team and custom solutions are developed quickly to address the needs that are discussed.

The community colleges in the region, Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, also have great relationships with businesses and through their Business Advisory Councils are consistently evaluating the competencies taught through standard curriculum and revising/amending coursework to meet business demand. Table 25 below details the top ten (10) educational programs by award numbers for the region, which include the community colleges, other institutes of higher education, and private for-profit training providers.

²⁴ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Demographic Profile, March 2021

Table 25 – Educational Attainment & Awards²⁵

Title	Cert. & 2 Year	4 Year	Post-grad	Total
Business Administration & Management, General	96	108	30	234
Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	88	112	0	200
Liberal Arts & Sciences, General Studies & Humanities, Other	163	0	0	163
Medical/Clinical Assistant	161	0	0	161
Biological & Physical Sciences	109	0	0	109
General Studies	102	4	0	106
Phlebotomy Technician/Phlebotomist	88	0	0	88
Social Sciences, General	72	2	4	78
Psychology, General	0	71	0	71
Liberal Arts & Sciences/Liberal Studies	60	8	0	68

An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)]

A full strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis was completed by the WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium in November 2020.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged stakeholders and partners Partners and stakeholders desire to be cohesive and want to work together Strong expertise in the field Qualified and committed staff Region wants to be collaborative Strong relationship between workforce development and economic development Strong relationship between workforce development and K-12 schools Allegheny Highlands feels heard and supported Staff are proactive in finding new stakeholders Administrative and field staff have grant writing expertise and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Too many cooks in the kitchen” – too many organizations in the system duplicating services Federal funding has decreased over the past few years, which has been relied upon as the main source of funding Lack of communication between stakeholders Institutional inertia for job seekers and businesses Stakeholders not aligned Lack of an investment from businesses to grow their current workforce from within Lack of apprenticeship programs and ability to “sell” the program due to bureaucracy No good single pipeline source for talent
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative approaches to funding Creation of more training programs to meet business demand More engagement and programs with youth and young adults, particularly engagement with youth in high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 and economic impacts from shutdown Reduction and lack of funding Partners and stakeholders that continue to operate in silos Too much bureaucracy and administrative work can prohibit innovation and flexibility

²⁵ JobsEQ, Chmura Economics, Award Data, March 2021

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of unemployed and underemployed individuals due to COVID-19 • Creation of better working cultures for local businesses • Assisting companies in investing in growing their existing employees and training new employees • Elimination of confusion on the different training providers and the resources available • Better relationships between the workforce development board and local businesses (single point of contact) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New entities starting workforce programs without understanding the current availability and the workforce system • Not enough childcare opportunities in the region to meet the needs of working families • Lack of coordination of resources amongst partners in the workforce system • Transportation limitations in the region • High areas of unemployment and poverty in the region • Not enough youth and young adults to fill the talent needs of the future (talent attraction) • Health access and general health of citizens in Southwest Virginia
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Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth with disability, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

Local area’s strategy for ensuring the availability of comprehensive services for all Youth
 Following the spirit of the WIOA legislation, the WVVDB coordinates the service delivery strategies for the WIOA Title I Youth Program and employs a Youth Program Manager who ensures that interested participants are screened for eligibility and subsequently enrolled in the Title I Youth program, if applicable. Should individuals not qualify for the Title I Youth Program, they are referred to other agencies and/or programs that may assist them in their education and employment goals, which many times includes the WIOA Title I Adult program if they 18 years of age or older. Partnerships with other workforce agencies, non-profits, community action agencies, and more allow the Youth Program Manager to quickly refer individuals to other programs should they not meet the criteria for the Title I Youth program. Individuals that are enrolled in the program are then assessed to gauge their basic literacy skills (reading and math) as well as the career interests and aptitudes. An initial objective assessment is completed using the electronic case management system of record, the Virginia Workforce Connection, to identify potential barriers to employment or additional services that are needed to ensure success of the Youth participant to reach their goals. These barriers or challenges to their education and employment goals must be addressed in the Title I Youth’s Individual Service Strategy.

How the area will identify and select successful providers of youth activities and delivery of the fourteen youth program elements required under WIOA

Under federal WIOA legislation, the responsibility of identifying and selecting successful providers of youth activities is placed on the Local Workforce Development Board. The WVVDB ensures that the delivery of services to eligible participants of the Title I Youth program is seamless, efficient, and equitable. While the WVVDB coordinates the eligibility determination, assessment administration, and initial employment plan activities, the fourteen elements are delivered by the most appropriate organizations and/or agencies, who are either competitively procured or identified in other means, such as government to government contracts, sole-source procurement processes, or emergency procurement processes. Providers of youth

activities are reviewed and selected to ensure that eligible Title I Youth participants receive the best possible services throughout the entire region.

Strategies to ensure that all eligible WIOA youth receive access to the required program elements and activities during their enrollment in the WIOA youth program

The Youth Program Manager that is employed by the WVVWDB is well-versed in the fourteen program elements and all activities surrounding enrollment, assessment, and planning are done around the fourteen elements that are available for service delivery. All eligible WIOA Title I Youth participants are exposed to the fourteen elements of the program during the development of the Individual Service Strategy. Using the objective assessment and planning tools on the Virginia Workforce Connection has allowed for the Youth Program Manager to develop employment and education goals that are attainable for the youth, as well as an understanding of the youth's potential or current barriers to these goals. This allows for the identification of which element(s) of the Title I Youth program will be utilized to assist the youth in reaching their goals. Youth can request connection to additional elements should they be interested.

How the required program design elements will be addressed as part of the development of youth service strategies

The following details how the fourteen elements will be provided to eligible Title I Youth participants:

1. *Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery* – Title I Youth participants who need these services are referred by the program provider to the adult education providers in the region, including Roanoke Valley Alleghany Region 5 Adult Education for individuals that reside in the Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig or Roanoke or the Cities of Covington, Roanoke or Salem. Individuals that reside in Franklin County are referred to the West Piedmont Adult and Career Education (Region 12) programs. General Educational Development (GED) attainment and workplace readiness preparation classes are also held on-site at both the Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center and the Virginia Career Works – Franklin Center and are open-enrollment. Individuals who reside in the Alleghany Highlands may attend these courses at other locations throughout the community.
2. *Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services* are provided by staff from the local K-12 public school systems as well as the regional Adult Education providers. The program provider for the WIOA Title I Youth program provides cooperative case management with these services to assist participants in obtaining their secondary school diploma or equivalent or assisting them with reaching other goals in the education and employment pathway.
3. *Paid and unpaid work experiences* are provided along with an academic or occupational education component and may include the following types of work experiences:
 - Summer employment opportunities
 - Other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
 - Internship and job shadowing
 - Pre-apprenticeship programs
 - On-the-Job Training opportunities

The program provider, along with business services staff with the WVVWDB, coordinate with local businesses to establish these opportunities for WIOA Title I Youth participants. Youth that are placed in these activities receive an incentive payment for their attendance, participation, and other educational gains. The program provider also carries liability insurance to protect the participant and the business while the work

experience is ongoing. The academic component is provided either before or during the work experience activity and relates directly to the participant's interest and goals.

4. *Occupational skills training* is provided to youth who are interested in this element on a limited basis with WIOA Title I Youth funding, and more commonly provided by co-enrollment in the WIOA Title I Adult program. Participants who are co-enrolled receive funding through the WIOA Title I Adult program for their occupational skills training and receive funding through the WIOA Title I Youth program for other activities such as paid work experience, support services, and more. Occupational skills training is provided through an Individual Training Account (ITA) with providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Trainings that the participants are interested in are also evaluated to ensure that they lead to occupations or career pathways toward occupations in high-demand industries and sectors, particularly those that are identified above as the target sectors for the region. As WIOA Title I funds are funds of "last resort", additional financial aid and resources are utilized before Title I funds for payment.
5. *Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training* is provided to applicable WIOA Title I Youth participants by training providers as well as Adult Education partners. This is more frequently known as the PluggedIn model and several similar models are currently running in the region. This is a great opportunity to ensure that WIOA Title I Youth participants complete their occupational skills training as well as receive instruction on workplace readiness, computer literacy, basic skills, and more.
6. *Leadership development opportunities* are provided to all WIOA Title I Youth in many forms. All youth receive services from the Youth Program Manager related to resume and cover letter development. There are also instances where the program provider convenes workshops and other facilitated sessions with partner agencies to learn workplace readiness skills, teamwork skills, and more. This could also include business tours, career exploration activities, virtual reality/simulation experiences, and more. When activities are scheduled, participants are required to attend.
7. *Support services* are provided to youth by the program provider based on the need from the WIOA Title I Youth participant. A supportive services policy is in place for the region and can be found here: [Supportive Services Policy](#). The most common supportive services that are provided to participants include transportation assistance (mileage reimbursement, bus passes, etc.), uniform/clothes purchase for employment and/or education activities, equipment/tools purchase for employment and/or education activities, and other accommodations to ensure that activities are completed successfully.
8. *Adult mentoring* is provided to participants in need of this element by a variety of partners. The program provider would first evaluate if the participant were eligible for any services through the Boys and Girls Club, or the Big Brother Big Sisters program that was recently acquired by Total Action for Progress. There are also several small mentoring programs that have been started by local organizations, including the community college, that would be able to provide this service. The program provider would be responsible for referring the participant to the appropriate mentoring provider.
9. *Follow-up services* is provided directly by the program provider and is completed on a quarterly basis for WIOA Title I Youth participants who have had their case closed from the program. Cases are closed for a variety of reasons, including successful completion of activities and placement in education or employment as well as unsuccessful completion and non-responsiveness. Supplemental information is gathered during follow-up contacts as well as additional services are shared that may be applicable to the participant, including workshops or other services being provided through the

Virginia Career Works Centers or the workforce development system. Should participants express a need to be re-enrolled in the program or need continued services, the program provide would evaluate the need for re-enrollment and/or if services could be provided through the follow-up process. Follow-up services continue for at least 12 months after the participant enters the follow-up process.

10. *Comprehensive guidance and counseling* are provided to individuals that require professional counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse. A referral would be made by the program provider to the appropriate entity based on the need for counseling and what entity has the expertise for the service.
11. *Financial literacy education* is provided to all Title I Youth participants in the form of a referral to the Financial Empowerment Center (FEC). The FEC was established by the City of Roanoke in early 2020 and continues its service virtually. The FEC counselors can work with individuals in any capacity and at any stage of their financial literacy journey. Should an individual need more basic services, the FEC works directly with BankOn, a program that provides individuals basic skills such as opening a checking account, opening a savings account, writing a check, etc.
12. *Entrepreneurial skills training* is provided to participants in the WIOA Title I Youth program by a referral to the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center (RRSBDC). Should any participant request assistance with starting their own business, the program provide would make this referral so that the RRSBDC can assist the participant in understanding how to start a small business, financial needs, marketing assets, etc.
13. *Services that provide labor market and employment information* can be provided from a plethora of resources at the disposal of both the Youth Program Manager and the program provider. These resources include JobsEQ produced by Chumura Economics, the Virginia LMI Database administered by the Virginia Employment Commission, Onet Online data from Onet, and more. All participants in the WIOA Title I Youth program receive labor market information, typically at the same time that a career interest and aptitude assessment is administered.
14. *Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training* is provided by either a referral to the region's Adult Education programs, or in combination with additional activities for Leadership Development Opportunities. This can include college tours, workplace readiness, basic skills evaluation, etc.

Strategies to identify, recruit, and retain out-of-school youth, and efforts to ensure the required percent of WIOA youth funds are expended

The WVVWDB has put into policy that all expenditures related to the WIOA Title I Youth program will be at least 75% devoted toward out-of-school youth. This includes youth ages 18-24 who are not enrolled in secondary or post-secondary education at the time of enrollment into the WIOA Title I Youth program. Most outreach and recruitment strategies for the WVVWDB, executed by the Youth Program Manager, target the out-of-school youth population. A significant effort has been made to rebuild relationships with youth service providers so that referrals to the WIOA Title I Youth program would increase. This has included targeting organizations that serve youth with barriers to employment that align with the barriers identified for eligibility purposes for the Title I Youth program. Examples of targeted outreach has included the Salvation Army New Day Center for homeless youth, regional adult education programs for youth who are dropouts or working on their high school equivalency, the Department of Corrections and jails for youth who are involved in the justice system, the Departments of Social Services for pregnant/parenting youth and involved in foster care, and more. The most successful form of recruitment has been word-of-mouth with the participants who are currently enrolled in the program. Many have gone and told of the success they achieved while being

enrolled in the WIOA Title I Youth program and have encouraged friends and family members to also enroll.

Policy regarding serving youth who do not meet income eligibility guidelines, including appropriate referrals

There are many barriers to education and/or employment that a youth may have to be determined eligible for the WIOA Title I Youth program. While youth who are considered in-school must be documented as low-income with an additional barrier to education and/or employment, for out-of-school youth, low-income is one of several barriers that can be met, along with the individual being Basic Skills Deficient or having English as their second language. A large majority of the participants in the WIOA Title I Youth program in LWDA3 are considered out-of-school youth, and many have other barriers to employment that do not require them to meet the low-income threshold. However, when a situation arises where a youth does not meet the income eligibility guidelines, the youth is referred to other applicable programs, such as the WIOA Title I Adult program if they are 18 years of age or older, to assist the youth in reaching their goals. There are many programs in the region, including federal discretionary grants targeted to youth (YouthBuild, Y.A.L.E, etc.) as well as other programs for education assistance (FastForward, FANTIC, etc.).

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 local human services agencies

The WVVWDB has taken steps to ensure that the agencies and organizations in the regional workforce development system have appropriate communication mechanisms to connect in order to coordinate service delivery. While the Youth Council was dissolved during the transition from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to the WIOA in 2014, there have been several instances where partner agencies and other organizations have requested an outlet to be in place similar to the former Youth Council. The WVVWDB is developing the Blue Ridge Youth Council (BRYC) that will allow for key youth partner agencies, including Job Corps, Total Action for Progress, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Departments of Social Services, local K-12 schools, community colleges, and more to convene and discuss programmatic additions/changes, referrals, and more. While they are not youth devoted, the region currently has a Blue Ridge Partners Consortium, in which all partners to the systemwide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) meet quarterly to review service delivery strategies, partnership opportunities, programmatic changes/additions, and more.

The City of Roanoke has had a Youth outreach office for many years and in past years, has operated a youth summer employment program to allow for career exploration, post-secondary exposure, and summer employment placement for youth within the City of Roanoke. While this program has traditionally been operated by Goodwill Industries of the Valley, the COVID-19 global pandemic caused the program to be halted during the summer of 2020. Beginning in the summer of 2021, the City of Roanoke is now procuring the services of organizations to operate the program, and Goodwill Industries of the Valleys has asked the WVVWDB to partner with them to effectively serve youth in the City and leverage the Title I Youth program dollars that are already allocated to this service.

The WVVWDB is also looking to establish a virtual Work Experience/Internship program that would allow for youth to participate in career exploration activities with local businesses, with a project or hands-on activity assigned to them as well. Using innovative tools such as virtual

reality, simulations, and more, the WVVDB would be able to serve more individuals with more business participation to hopefully encourage youth to not only enter high-demand industries and occupations, but also to remain in the Roanoke Valley and the Alleghany Highlands. This will be done in partnership with many of the non-profit and community-based organizations in the region who are working toward the same goal.

Efforts taken to ensure compliance with applicable child labor and safety regulations

All activities for the Title I Youth program that require the WVVDB or other youth service provider to comply with applicable child labor and safety regulations references the relevant legislation in contracts and/or agreements. All Work Experience/Internship activities reference these child labor and safety regulations in the signed agreements with businesses, and all are gone over verbally during the time that the agreement is developed.

Pay-for performance policy as applicable

The WVVDB does not currently operate any pay-for-performance contracts.

Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area, including:

Access to and delivery of career services (basic, individualized, and follow-up)

Career services (basic, individualized, and follow-up) are provided to individuals through a variety of ways, including in-person through the American Job Center locations in the region (Virginia Career Works Centers), virtually utilizing electronic means (Zoom, Facetime, LiveChat, etc.) or via phone. Through the COVID-19 global pandemic, access to services has been at the forefront of conversations as in-person options for services had to be limited to adhere to social distancing requirements and limited ways that individuals could gather in inside spaces. Services are provided to individuals in a way that is convenient, efficient, effective and equitable and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the best method for providing services to that individual. Services are made accessible to all customers, based on their need and ability, if applicable.

Basic Career Services

Basic Career Services are available to all individuals seeking services in the region. Services include:

1. *Eligibility Determination* for not only continued services through the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and/or Youth program, but also services through other federal and discretionary grants offered by the state agencies and community-based organizations in the regional workforce development system. This also includes eligibility for supportive services for other human or wrap around services to support the individual in achieving their goals.
2. *Outreach, intake and orientation to information and other services* available through the American Job Centers or partners programs that are involved in the regional workforce development system that may not be co-located within the physical Virginia Career Works Centers.
3. *Initial assessment* of skill levels for individuals seeking assistance which may include basic skills assessments or career interest and aptitudes but may also include an individual's need for wrap around supportive service to reach their employment and/or educational goals.
4. *Labor exchange services* which include job search and placement assistance and recruitment and business services on behalf of employers to assist individuals in obtaining self-sufficient employment.

5. *Provide referrals and coordination of activities* for individuals that express a need for additional services that need to be addressed beyond basic career services. This includes not only referrals to partner agencies in the workforce development system but referrals to other agencies for human, social, medical, legal, or other relevant services.
6. *Provision of workforce and labor market employment* information to provide individuals with relevant information on available career opportunities and career pathway opportunities within the region. This is done utilizing the Virginia Works information supplied and managed by the Virginia Employment Commission as well as the JobsEQ system that is shared amongst the workforce development system, the regional planning commission, and the regional economic development organization.
7. *Provision of performance information* to an individual which is provided in the public areas of all Resource Rooms of the Virginia Career Works Centers as well as provided online through the Virginia Workforce Connection and the My Journey Portal.
8. *Provision of information in usable and understandable formats and languages on performance information.* This is done by providing translation services and interpreters on request through the Propio language line or Video Relay services. There are also “I Speak” cards and other informative methods of assisting individuals in understanding their right to have information provided in formats that are readable, understandable and the region can provide accommodations as requested by the individual.
9. *Provision of information in usable and understandable formats and language regarding supportive services.* This is done by providing translation services and interpreters on request through the Propio language line or Video Relay services. There are also “I Speak” cards and other informative methods of assisting individuals in understanding their right to have information provided in formats that are readable, understandable and the region can provide accommodations as requested by the individual.
10. *Provision of information and meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation* is provided directly to individuals through the Resource Room and the partner organizations. Assistance is provided on how to file claims using the computers and other equipment available at the Virginia Career Works Centers and if further clarification is needed for specific claim questions, representatives from the Virginia Employment Commission are available to provide this service.
11. *Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA* is provided to individuals by referrals and direct access to scholarship, federal financial aid, and other discretionary grant programs that are available to support individuals in their employment and/or educational goals. Examples of this are FAFSA, FastForward, FANTIC, REV, etc.

Individualized Career Services

The following individualized career services are provided by the partners in the workforce development system either directly through the American Job Centers (Virginia Career Works Centers) or by access through the Centers and referrals to appropriate partners.

1. *Comprehensive and specialized assessments* are provided to individuals to analyze their basic skills levels and formal career interests and aptitudes. The TABE assessment is provided by Title II Adult Education partners in the region at no cost which analyzes the basic skill levels of individuals (reading and math). Career interests and aptitudes are analyzed in a number of ways, but two formal assessments, the Virginia Wizard or the ONet Objective Assessment may be used by partners.
2. *Development of an individual employment plan* is completed to identify and individual's employment and/or educational goals and to assist in providing regular progress updates to partner programs.
3. *Group counseling*

4. *Individual counseling*
5. *Career planning*
6. *Short-term pre-vocational services are provided to individuals who need short-term skills that may or may not result in an industry-recognized credential to obtain employment. This could include computer literacy classes, workplace readiness, basic skills related to an industry, etc.*
7. *Internships and work experiences* linked to high demand target sector or career pathways within those target sectors.
8. *Workforce preparation activities*
9. *Financial literacy services* through referral to relevant financial educational institutions, like the Financial Empowerment Center.
10. *Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance*
11. *English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs*

Follow-up Services

Follow-up services will be made available, as appropriate, for participants in the WIOA Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker program who are placed in unsubsidized employment for a minimum of 12 months after exit from the program.

The area's definition of self-sufficiency to be used when determining eligibility for intensive and training services for employed individuals

The Blue Ridge region is an economically diverse region that not only includes the largest city in the Commonwealth of Virginia west of Richmond but also includes rural areas that lack basic access to services such as broadband and transit. This diversity contributes to a heavy analysis for the region when it comes to determining a level of self-sufficiency. The WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium is also aware of the large number of individuals within the region that fall into the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) population. These are more commonly known as underemployed individuals is one of the hardest populations to reach and increase awareness of the workforce development system and the services it provides.

The self-sufficiency of the area continues to defined as earning 175% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), and any individual who is a member of a family who does not exceed this amount are established as a priority group to receive WIOA Title I Services. The LLSIL is established annually and reviewed annually on a local level and the data can be found at www.doleta.gov/lisil and also in local policy.

The area's definition of hard-to-serve populations with additional barriers to employment

The WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium has identified hard-to-serve populations with additional barriers to employment that meet the following criteria:

1. An individual 17 years old and above that lacks work experience.
2. An individual with a disability
3. An individual with a criminal background or involved in the justice system
4. An individual 17 years old or older who has not worked for the same employer longer than three (3) consecutive months in the prior twelve months.
5. Dependent residing in a single parent household.
6. Individual who is residing in or has resided in during the past two (2) years, a residential placement facility, including a detention facility, substance abuse treatment facility, emergency shelter, psychiatric hospital, halfway house or foster group home.
7. Natural disaster evacuees

8. Individual who has experienced or is experiencing effects of substance abuse either by themselves, family members related by blood or marriage, guardians, or other immediate family members such as those connected by birth, adoption, civil partnership, or cohabitation such as grandparents, great-grandparents, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, aunts, uncles, siblings-in-law, half-siblings, cousins, adopted children, step-parents, step-children and cohabitating partners.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

Describe the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment).

In November 2020, the WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium completed a strategic planning process to set the overarching goals for the workforce development system in the Roanoke Valley and the Alleghany Highlands. The process allowed for the WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium to receive feedback from stakeholders in the region, including chambers of commerce, economic development directors, community-based organizations, non-profits, business representatives, educational institutions, and more. The following are the mission and vision statements that were developed as a part of the strategic planning process:

Mission

To serve as a regional talent resource for businesses by providing trained and skilled job seekers that meet current and future demand.

Vision

The region will have both a skilled and diverse talent pipeline for businesses and employment opportunities that provide self-sufficient wages that promote all around success for the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands.

The following shows the Goals and Strategies for the regional workforce development system serving the Roanoke Valley and the Alleghany Highlands as outlined in the strategic plan.

Goal #1: Strengthen the role of the workforce development board in the region to be the premier talent development resource.

Strategies:

1. Increase involvement with economic development efforts in the region.
2. Increase involvement with GO Virginia Region 2 Council.
3. Increase engagement of workforce development board members.
4. Strengthen presence and utilization of Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Goal #2: Lead the convening and coordination of the partners of the workforce development system to reduce competition, streamline efforts, and eliminate gaps in service delivery.

Strategies:

1. Submit applications to federal, state, local, public, and private sources of funding to eliminate gaps in service delivery and enhance the workforce development system.
2. Create the Blue Ridge Partnership Consortium that consists of all workforce partners participating in the system-wide Memorandum of Understanding.
3. Conduct a program asset mapping of the workforce development system to better understand offerings and suggest alignment opportunities.

Goal #3: Increase awareness of the workforce development board and the system partners.

Strategies:

1. Implement the workforce board as “the front door” for workforce services.
2. Produce online business resources for all workforce programs to be used by internal and external partners.
3. Conduct direct marketing to underemployed and out-of-work individuals in the region.
4. Implement sector strategies with key business leaders to drive program development and increase the knowledge of the workforce development system with business and industry.

Goal #4: Develop and retain a qualified, desirable workforce that meets current and future job demand.

Strategies:

1. Be an active partner with the United Way Roanoke Valley to distribute and implement the ALICE survey for the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands.
2. Increase the number of job seekers utilizing services through Virginia Career Works who receive a new job, better job, or increased wages.
3. Ensure that the workforce development board is involved in conversations surrounding infrastructure development with economic development and locality partners.
4. Provide virtual and in-person targeted opportunities for businesses to recruit new employees.
5. Increase awareness of career development and career pathway opportunities in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands to attract and retain talent.

One of the key themes that came out of the strategic planning sessions was the need to engage with individuals who are not traditionally known for visiting the Virginia Career Works Centers. This includes populations such as youth, individuals with criminal backgrounds, individuals receiving benefits through local Departments of Social Services, individuals with disabilities and more. A particular group of interest for the WVDDB and the CLEO Consortium was individuals who are underemployed, or who are represented in the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) populations.

The full strategic plan can be found here: <https://www.vcwblueridge.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WVDDB-Strategic-Plan-2020-2024-FINAL.pdf>.

Describe how the local board’s strategic vision and goals will support the strategies identified in the Virginia Combined State Plan.

In the development of the strategic plan and this local plan, the WVDDB and CLEO Consortium reviewed the final Virginia Combined State Plan that was developed in coordination with all of the core and required partners of the state workforce development system. All of the goals that are identified above and included in the strategic plan align greatly with the five (5) strategies identified in the Virginia Combined State Plan. The goal for the entirety of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the agencies and organizations involved in the statewide workforce development system is about delivering high quality services to both businesses and job seekers and identifying how we can provide training, education, and support services to individuals in order to meet current and future job demand. All of the goals and strategies of the WVDDB and the CLEO Consortium directly correspond to the goals of the state, including helping individuals

access jobs that pay self-sufficient, family-sustaining wages, developing a qualified workforce, increasing business engagement and awareness of the system, and reducing barriers to employment for individuals in the region.

Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development.

The Vision of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development is that “every Virginian, regardless of the barriers they face, has equitable access to tools and opportunities leading to careers that pay family-sustaining wages, and every business has access to a highly skilled workforce”. The goals and strategies identified in the strategic plan for the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium relate directly to this vision, as it is important to provide access and outreach to all populations to allow them to achieve self-sufficient employment with family-sustaining wages. The goals of the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium support efforts to conduct outreach to bring in populations that have not traditionally utilized the Virginia Career Works Centers or the regional workforce development system and bring services to these populations in a convenient and effectively manner. It is also the view of the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium to recognize that businesses are the primary customer of the workforce development system, and it is the responsibility of the workforce development system to provide a qualified and skilled workforce to meet current and future job demand.

Describe a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local areas to achieve the local board's strategic vision and goals.

Partnership and collaboration is key to executing the strategic plan of the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium, and thus, one of the key roles of the WVVWDB is to convene the core, required, and critical partners of the workforce development system to reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and work toward continuous improvement of service delivery. During the strategic planning sessions, not only were all core and required partners participating as members of the WVVWDB, but feedback was also gathered from other key stakeholders to ensure that their voice was heard when formulating the goals and strategies for the region. The idea of partnerships and collaboration was expressed numerous times by WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium members, as the region understands that it is not wise to work in silos. The Blue Ridge Partnership Consortium has been formed which is a quarterly meeting of all stakeholders that are a part of the Memorandum of Understanding for the regional workforce development system. This group encourages open and frequent communication regarding needs, gaps in services, and outlets for innovative thinking on how to improve service delivery and provide services to populations that need it most. While this group has formed, partnerships in the region are not limited to this formal document, as there are other partners that play key roles in service delivery surrounding human services and mental health resources and supportive services.

Describe how the local board strategic plan is designed to combine public and private resources to support sector strategies, career pathways, and career readiness skills development.

The strategic plan in several instances notes that one of the weaknesses of the region is the reliance solely on WIOA Title I federal funding over the years. While this was effective during the Great Recession and shortly after, over the last five (5) years, the region has experienced significant reductions in federal WIOA Title I funding that has resulted in staffing and service cuts. WIOA Title I programs are not alone in this challenge, as the regional economy improved dramatically after the Great Recession and funding from all core programs was reduced significantly. While the regional economy produced data that showed recovery and success, the

individuals that were not employed prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic were individuals who had significant barriers to employment and had been turned down from numerous employment opportunities. These individuals were difficult to serve, as the resources needed to reduce the barriers to employment were significant but not available through regular federal funding. Throughout the strategic plan, the WVVDB and CLEO Consortium groups both acknowledged that the need to diversify funding is imperative. This effort has already begun by requesting funding support from the eight localities in the region. In 2020, 4 of the 8 localities provided funding to the WVVDB for efforts beyond the federal funding, with the hopes that all 8 will contribute once the COVID-19 global pandemic comes to end. The WVVDB staff is fortunate to have grant writing experience and has led efforts to apply for federal, state, and local funding efforts to supplement funding and provide other services that fill gaps in the region.

One of the biggest efforts that the WVVDB and CLEO Consortium has been undertaking has been the development of the talent pipeline beginning with students in the K-12 public school systems. The Career Quest event gives the opportunities for business to present hands-on activities for 7th graders to become interested in career opportunities in their industry in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands. In 2019, the event had over 4,000 7th grade students attend from school across the Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, and Alleghany Highlands.

Regional vision for workforce development

The regional vision for workforce development is: The region will have both a skilled and diverse talent pipeline for businesses and employment opportunities that provide self-sufficient wages that promote all around success for the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands.

Protocols for planning workforce strategies that anticipate industry needs

The Business Solutions Teams in the region, one for the Roanoke Valley and the second for the Alleghany Highlands, include partners from all core and required agencies, as well as relevant entities such as economic development that are critical partners to meet business demand. These teams discuss current and future trends, hear directly from businesses on their current and upcoming projected needs, and provide time for partners to discuss any needs that they have come across during their contacts with businesses. Industry needs are discussed during these meetings and customized solutions are developed to assist the business in meeting that need. Many times, the business is assisted with recruitment and hiring of new employees in large amounts, which can be done through general recruitment using the statewide labor exchange or other methods identified by the business or through large hiring events in-person or utilizing virtual hiring event software. Sometimes the business needs more specific services, and the team identifies the partner agencies that are best equipped to assist them with their needs. These teams and their efforts are coordinated by the Business and Development Coordinator who is staff to the WVVDB, which the partners have endorsed because of the convening function of the WVVDB and provides a single point of contact if needed. The Business and Development Coordinator also works with the Executive Director to the WVVDB and economic development partners to anticipate needs based on data as well as economic development prospects that expand or relocate in the region.

Needs of incumbent and underemployed workers in the region

The regional partners of the Blue Ridge region work together to provide business and job seeker services to meet the needs of incumbent and underemployed workers in the region. The Business Solutions Teams, mentioned above, work with businesses in the region to identify needs to upskill their existing workforce, or incumbent workers, and provide program services, as available, to help mitigate the financial burden on the employers to do so. Virginia Career

Works – Blue Ridge (VCWBR) staff, including staff to the WVVDB, also have partnerships with and working knowledge of private and public training providers that can assist in providing this service to the existing business employees within the region. Furthermore, underemployed workers in the region are served through many workforce programs, including WIOA Title I, to identify gaps in skills, credentials needed, or new career paths that will lead to self-sufficiency. The region also holds business roundtables to help foster communication and identify gaps in the skills of the regional workforce, whether employed, underemployed or unemployed. The workforce system of the region then collaborates to provide services and training opportunities to meet the needs identified.

Development of partners and guidelines for various forms of on-the-job training, such as registered apprenticeships

The Business Solutions Teams in the region include staff from various workforce programs that provide on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship services. As members of this team, staff from organizations such as the WVVDB (who oversee WIOA Title I program funding and provides on-the-job training as a service of that program) have working relationships with staff from the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) who oversee the Registered Apprenticeship program in Virginia. The regional workforce system also includes the local school systems and the Career and Technical Education facilities within the region. The WVVDB has worked to build and strengthen its' relationship with the schools in the region and be a partner in their efforts over recent years to increase apprenticeship opportunities for students while in school, leading to eventual self-sufficiency as high school graduates with work experience. Staff from each of these organizations partner together to develop relationships and communication to provide these services to the region.

Setting of standards and metrics for operational delivery

The Blue Ridge Region, through the regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has identified standards and metrics for delivery of services. Partners to the MOU agree on the level of customer service, provision of programs, and overall standard expectations that represent the Virginia Career Works brand. Further, within each of the Virginia Career Works Centers in the region, Standard Operating Procedures exist to ensure effective, efficient, and equitable services are provided at each of the locations and by all staff that represent Virginia Career Works in the region. The One Stop Coordinator for the region oversees provision of services and staff delivery to provide feedback and review processes for changes, as needed. Management at each Center also participates in regular meetings to discuss issues, concerns, or changes that may arise throughout the year, and any new training or communication that may be needed to ensure standards are met.

Alignment of monetary and other resources, including private funds and in-kind contributions, to support the workforce development system

The partners of the Blue Ridge region work together in developing a regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which helps to identify funds and resources within the region to support the overall system, businesses, and residents. Beyond the partners that sign the regional MOU, the Blue Ridge region also works to include other community organizations such as religious organizations and community groups to identify other resources, services and funding that is available to the region. Further, the WVVDB works as the regional convener of workforce services within the region and, as such, works to reduce competition and increase collaboration of organizations. Reducing competition and, therefore, duplication of services and funding helps to align services overall within the region to support overall development and success. For

example, the WVWDB often supports and partners on grant applications for funding to fill service gaps within the region.

Generation of new sources of funding to support workforce development in the region

As mentioned above, staff from partner organizations within the region put conscious effort into supporting and partnering on grant applications and private funding applications to support workforce development of the region. Partners also share new funding opportunities with each other, not only for support for their own request, but also to ensure that the organization with the most capacity to oversee these funds is the organization that may be the one who applies for and/or receives it. For example, when a federal grant funding opportunity becomes available, WVWDB staff work to communicate with partner community organizations to discuss which one would be proceeding with the application and support conversations for participation, as applicable, of each organization in the overall effort. WVWDB staff also work closely with the localities of the region to document ways the workforce system as a whole provides value to the region and how the governmental entities can partner in those efforts. As mentioned above, 4 of the 8 localities in the region have provided funding so far, with plans for the remaining localities to assist with funding in the future.

Section 3: Local Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area

The regional workforce system is made up of partners in the region that are not only core and required partners under the WIOA legislation, but also other local partners that have niche services to offer and contribute toward the success of job seekers and businesses in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands.

Programs that are included in the system

Table 26 below details the key partners in the workforce development system that contribute toward the success of service delivery to both job seekers and businesses.

Table 26 – Workforce System Partners

Core & Mandated Partners	
WIOA Title I Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western Virginia Workforce Development Board
WIOA Title I Youth Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WorkPlace Western Virginia Workforce Development Board
WIOA Title II Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roanoke Valley Alleghany Region 5 Adult Education West Piedmont Adult and Career Education
WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western Virginia Workforce Development Board Virginia Employment Commission
WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Department for Blind and Visually Impaired
Title V Senior Community Employment Services Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodwill Industries of the Valleys
Carl D. Perkins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virginia Western Community College Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Employment & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roanoke Redevelopment Housing Authority
Job Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Ridge Job Corps Center

Jobs for Veterans State Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Employment Commission
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleghany/Covington Department of Social Services • Botetourt County Department of Social Services • Craig County Department of Social Services • Franklin County Department of Social Services • Roanoke City Department of Health & Human Services • Roanoke County/Salem Department of Social Services
Trade Adjustment Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Employment Commission
Unemployment Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Employment Commission
YouthBuild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Action for Progress
Economic Development Partners	
Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation	Botetourt County Department of Economic Development
Franklin County Department of Economic Development	Roanoke City Department of Economic Development
Roanoke County Department of Economic Development	Salem City Department of Economic Development
Roanoke Regional Partnership	Virginia Economic Development Partnership
Chambers of Commerce	
Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce	Botetourt Chamber of Commerce
Smith Mountain Lake Chamber of Commerce	Vinton Chamber of Commerce
Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism	Roanoke-Salem Chamber of Commerce
Community Partners	
Goodwill Industries of the Valley	Total Action for Progress
Commonwealth Catholic Charities	Covington Redevelopment Housing Authority
Solutions That Empower People (STEP)	Blue Ridge Independent Living Center
Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center	Alleghany Highlands Community Services Board
Roanoke City/Alleghany Health Department	United Way Roanoke Valley
Virginia's Blue Ridge	Financial Empowerment Center
Freedom First Credit Union	RIDE Solutions
Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission	Blue Ridge Literacy

How the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006

The W/WDB and the CLEO Consortium work diligently with partners to carry out all of the core programs in the region, including the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The community colleges in Virginia are the recipients of the Carl D. Perkins funding, as well as the local K-12 schools. The W/WDB staff sit on advisory councils and career and technical education advisory committees that are responsible for the development of plans related to Perkins funding and subsequent expenditures in the region. The W/WDB staff provide valuable input regarding target industries and relevant labor market information to align programs and services to meet demand. The local schools as well as the community colleges have also

embraced programming related to Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, which the WVVWDB continues to be involved in related to business recruitment and awareness of the service.

How the local board coordinates and interacts with the Chief Local Elected Officials

The WVVWDB meets on a quarterly basis and discusses items to present to the CLEO Consortium for approval. The CLEO Consortium and the WVVWDB have entered into an agreement that details the responsibilities of each body and the reporting structure for items related to the oversight and administration of WIOA Title I. The CLEO Consortium and the WVVWDB have one joint meeting per year to discuss a review of the previous year and collaborate on annual goals and strategies. The CLEO Consortium provides perspective from the localities on workforce development needs that allow the WVVWDB to develop programs to meet the identified need.

Describe strategies and services that will be used in the local area

Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs

The staff of the WVVWDB, in partnership with the Roanoke Regional Partnership and the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce, have begun sector strategy groups for the Manufacturing and Healthcare industries with more planned to begin. These two industries are critical to the regional economy and are convened on a quarterly basis to discuss workforce needs and innovative ideas to build the talent pipeline. These roundtable meetings include businesses of all sizes and encourage businesses to collaborate to reduce costs and leverage opportunities to build the regional talent pipeline so that all benefit. The workforce development system also collaborates well with the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center and The Gauntlet program that support small business development. The services that are provided by the workforce development system are vital to startups and small businesses looking to grow in the region and have been utilized to hire and retain employees.

Most of the employer engagement is orchestrated by the Business Solutions Team, that is convened and organized by the Business and Development Coordinator with the WVVWDB. The Business Solutions Team convenes to discuss business need as well as invites businesses to speak to the team regarding their needs and brainstorm ways to build their talent pipeline. Members of the Business Solutions Team include all of the core and required partners as well as community partners, economic development representatives, and chambers of commerce.

Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area

The Business Solutions Team is the mechanism that enforces the need to meet the demand of businesses in the region. The WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium both understand that under WIOA, the business is the primary customer of the workforce system, and it is important the funding managed and overseen by the WVVWDB go toward producing a trained and skilled workforce to meet demand. The partners are also in favor of this strategy, as it helps to boost the regional economy and ensure that employment opportunities are available for individuals to earn self-sufficient and family-sustaining wages.

Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development

The relationship between the workforce development system and economic development has greatly improved in the past four years. The WVVWDB staff and the staff to the regional economic development organization, the Roanoke Regional Partnership, communicate often

and discuss ways to maximize talent attraction, talent retention, and economic development efforts. Many activities conducted by the WVVWDB are done in partnership with the Roanoke Regional Partnership, including sector strategy work, hiring events and open houses for major business and industry, and grant projects to support the development of the talent pipeline for the region. When economic development prospects visit the region, the WVVWDB is typically invited to those visits to discuss the available workforce, provide relevant labor market information, and to assist in promoting the Roanoke region.

The relationship between the local offices of economic development is also strong, and a committee of economic development directors is being formed to report to the WVVWDB on efforts in the region. This will assist the WVVWDB in being more aware of economic development efforts and needs from the workforce system to drive funding and programmatic changes and additions.

Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs

Unemployment insurance programs have been a topic of conversation throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic, and in the Blue Ridge region, the local unemployment staff and the other front-line staff from the Virginia Career Works Centers have been extremely collaborative to serve customers. The WVVWDB staff, along with staff at the Virginia Career Works Centers, have been working together to promote events, activities, and services directly to recipients of unemployment insurance. This will become more critical as the pandemic ends and unemployment insurance recipients will be required to search for work in order to collect benefits. The Blue Ridge region is in a good place in partnership with local Virginia Employment Commission staff and will be poised to assist individuals and produce services that will assist customers of the workforce system.

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities carried out in the region in which the local area is located (or planning region), and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5)]

The WVVWDB staff is very tied in with local, regional, and state economic development activities. This includes activities that are related to entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise. While many of the participants of the WIOA Title I programs are not interested in starting their own business, the workforce system has made a concerted effort to educate customers of the Virginia Career Works Centers (particularly those on unemployment insurance benefits) of the process to start their own business. The Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center has been instrumental in this effort and is planning workshops for individuals that are on unemployment insurance benefits to attend and learn more about services available for small business development.

The WVVWDB also received funding from the Norfolk Southern Foundation to promote the regional economy and assist individuals who were laid off from G.E., Freightcar America, and Norfolk Southern in 2018/2019 in finding employment. This included assisting individuals in starting their own business. Several individuals who were laid off from these establishments took advantage of the funding and purchased equipment, received training, or implemented software and/or processes to begin their small business. It was a great success, and the hope is to continue this service and open the opportunity to all individuals who have been laid off due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

The relationship between the WVVWDB staff and the K-12 and other education programs has improved over the last four years with the addition of services directly related to youth and young adults. The K-12 school systems had never been fully engaged in the activities of the workforce development system in the past, and now understand the benefit of the partnership with the WVVWDB and Virginia Career Works. Students in the K-12 school system are the beginning of the talent pipeline for the region and it is critically important that the region set them up for success. The WVVWDB staff is part of the regional career and technical staff meeting that occurs on a quarterly basis, and the K-12 Career and Technical Education staff have asked the WVVWDB staff to lead efforts surrounding regional career and technical education efforts. The WVVWDB also completed a Regional Career and Technical Education study in partnership with the K-12 schools in the region to identify opportunities for collaboration and improvement.

Describe how the local board will collaborate on local workforce investment activities with the community colleges in their area in the planning and delivery of workforce and training services.

There are two community colleges in the region that provide training and education to individuals in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands. Both institutions are excellent partners and provide invaluable support to the workforce development system. Both colleges sit on the WVVWDB and participate in the Virginia Career Works Centers to create programs and identify workforce needs to be addressed. The community colleges have been partners with the WVVWDB in several funding applications, some that were funded, and some that were not, to further expand the services that are provided to the region. The WVVWDB staff and the community college staff speak frequently about needs and the community colleges are able to provide more than just training to the communities they serve.

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

The WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium have an approved [Supportive Service policy](#) that allows for the WIOA Title I programs to provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, uniform/equipment purchases, and more to eligible individuals. The region has also procured funding in partnership with Total Action for Progress that provides additional funding for individuals that are customers of the workforce system to assist with things beyond Title I funds such as childcare, rental assistance, car repairs, food assistance, and more. This funding has proved invaluable during the COVID-19 global pandemic, as many individuals were laid off from their places of employment and were delayed in receiving their unemployment insurance benefits payment. Supportive services is always discussed as a need to address barriers to employment and provide wrap around services to customers of the workforce system and it is anticipated that this will continue to be a need as the local economy recovers from the pandemic. The WVVWDB convenes discussions around these gaps and works with partners agencies to find additional funding from federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources.

Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

From July 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021, the Virginia Employment Commission contracted with the WVDDB to provide Title III Wagner Peyser services due to the overwhelming work associated with unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The WVDDB was able to pivot Title III Wagner Peyser services quickly to be provided to individuals virtually and with social distancing and limited gathering restrictions in place. The WVDDB opened the Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center in July 2020 and continues to be open to provide services to individuals that need assistance with their job search. This has been a great period to evaluate the need of businesses and job seekers related to Wagner Peyser and how these services can be provided more efficiently and effectively. The collaboration between the WVDDB and the local staff and the District Manager from the VEC has increased and the relationship has blossomed to a level of trust, respect, and true partnership. There are many things that have been done during the pandemic that will be continued in the future due to the success (virtual hiring events, virtual appointment scheduling, rotations in the Resource Room, etc.). The other benefit of this contractual agreement has been the success of co-enrolling individuals in the Title III and Title I programs and truly assessing individuals beyond their initial stated need.

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities, including a description of how the local board will carry out the review of local applications. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

In the Blue Ridge region, Title II is operated by two entities. The first is the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Region 5 Adult Education, whose fiscal agent is the Salem City Public Schools. Region 5 covers the Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig and Roanoke and the Cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem. West Piedmont Adult Career and Education is the second provider in Region 12, and they cover the County of Franklin, with the rest of their region being in Local Workforce Development Area 17. Region 5 Adult Education is co-located in the Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center, the comprehensive Center for the region, and provided GED and high school equivalency courses on-site at the Roanoke Center four days per week. The West Piedmont Adult Career and Education programs operate out of the Virginia Career Works – Franklin Center and provide on-site classes there as well. Both programs are very integrated within the workforce development system and are great partners in collaborative efforts, particularly, opportunities for Integrated Training and Education. Both programs have become very innovative in how to provide services to individuals beyond GED or high school equivalency classes, including digital literacy, workplace readiness, and more. The WVDDB staff reviews applications every three years from entities that wish to operate the Region 5 Adult Education programs. Because Franklin County is the only county in a different workforce development area for West Piedmont Adult Career and Education, the WVDDB staff allows the staff from the West Piedmont Workforce Development Board in Local Workforce Development Area 17 to review the applications received for Region 12 Adult Education.

Describe how the local plan shall:

Specify the policies and protocols to be followed by all the region's workforce development entities when engaging the region's employers

The Business Solutions Teams are the primary mechanism that is used to engage the region's businesses in the workforce development system. There are two teams in the region

representing the Roanoke Valley and the Alleghany Highlands and both have developed a sense of trust, confidentiality, and integrity in their meetings and operations. All team members understand that attendees will share all activities related to business outreach with the team, except confidential information, to ensure that duplicative contacts are not being made. There is also an understanding that members of the Business Solutions Teams will not take the opportunity to contact businesses that are disclosed during the meeting but allow for partners who have developed a relationship with a business to execute services or connect them with appropriate services.

When contacting businesses, the partners agree that certain protocol is in place to ensure that businesses are served effectively and efficiently. Any business that reaches out to a partner agency in the workforce development system will be contacted within 48 business hours to assess and understand their identified need. A single point of contact protocol will be established with a member of the Business Solutions Team that either a) has a relationship already established with the business contact and/or b) may be able to assist the business in the most efficient and effective way. This point of contact for the business will share the need with the Business Solutions Team at the next meeting, or sooner, should the need arise. It is the responsibility of the Business Solutions Team member to bring appropriate partners to the table to ensure that the business receives the most comprehensive services available to meet their needs.

While a Business Resource Guide has been developed in the past for the team, this will be reviewed during this local plan time-period and provided electronically so all members of the Business Solutions Team will have access to provide to their business contacts. This resource guide will provide the business with a menu of services that may be provided to them to meet their workforce need and will promote the Business Solutions Team as the mechanism to receive this service.

Address how the region's workforce entities will involve employers in the formation of new workforce development activities

The partner agencies of the workforce system in the Blue Ridge region have all concluded that when new programs are being developed, it is important to include businesses in the conversation surrounding program design and development. The region has begun to convene sector strategies in target industries to ensure that businesses are also collaborating and understanding each other's workforce needs to identify creative collaborative solutions that may be used regionwide. Through these sector strategies and individual business outreach, workforce partners will be able to identify gaps in service delivery and identify areas where new workforce development activities would benefit the region. During the meetings of the Blue Ridge Partnership Consortium, partners will have opportunities to discuss new activities that have been identified and brainstorm with system partners on how services can be developed and funded to meet the business need.

Identify what activities will be undertaken to address employers' specific workforce needs

There are a variety of services and activities that are being utilized currently in the region to meet the specific workforce needs of local employers:

1. *Targeted recruitment events* have been extremely successful, particularly during the COVID-19 global pandemic, and new virtual software has been purchased by the WVWDB that allows for everything to take place online. Employers are extremely happy with the service and note that it is much less time consuming to participate virtually than at an in-person event. Recruitment for these virtual hiring events is completed by front-

- line staff and Business Solutions Team members, ensuring that those invited have the skills and training necessary to obtain employment with the participating business(es).
2. *On-the-Job Training* participation by employers has been steadily increasing over the last year. Businesses have been very interested in providing “reverse referrals” to the WVVDB and the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth staff to see if On-the-Job Training contracts can be executed. Many individuals during the global pandemic have needed extensive training in their new employment opportunities, and businesses have been excited to receive this incentive and assistance to offset their costs.
 3. *Incumbent Worker Training* has been extremely popular with businesses that are looking to increase the skills of their existing workers and backfill positions with entry level workers. Training that has been requested for employer’s existing workers has included technical manufacturing training, leadership development, lean management training, and project management.
 4. *Customized training* has been utilized in the past by the WVVDB and is the hope that this service will increase more in the future. Businesses can identify specific training that is needed for new employees to be successful in new employment, and WIOA Title I programs are able to provide 50% of the cost of training while the business covers the other 50% with a guarantee to hire.
 5. *Labor Market Information* is provided to businesses and has been done recently to provide information to businesses on competitive wages and compensation in the region. Many businesses are looking to reduce their turnover percentages and raise their wages to be more competitive against other businesses in the region.
 6. *Work Experience/Internships* are also available for businesses who want to provide opportunities for career exploration and work experience for youth and adults who lack work experience. Many employers use this to try out employees prior to hiring them to ensure that they fit the culture and team within the facility.
 7. *Rapid Response* services are provided to businesses that need assistance during periods of downsizing, mass reductions in force, restructuring, or closure.
 8. *Other consulting services* are provided to businesses to brainstorm solutions to their workforce needs or connect them with other resources such as local government, economic development, or state government incentives.

Describe how the direction given by the Governor and the local board to the one-stop operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

The WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium follow strictly the guidelines for priority of service for customers of the American Job Centers (Virginia Career Works Centers) and individuals who receive adult career and training services. The WVVDB has a local policy regarding Priority of Service that outlines the priority populations for the region as well as any additional priority populations that will be served. The Operations Director of the WVVDB runs a report monthly noting the percentage of WIOA Title I Adult participants who received career and/or training services to ensure compliance with the policy. This is reported to all front-line staff and reviewed at staff meetings as well to ensure that the region complies.

Priority of service for Veterans is also very pronounced at all of the Virginia Career Works Centers with signage, information for Veterans in the Resource Room and lobby, and on all virtual scheduling software.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Part of the strategic plan produced by the WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium detailed ways to engage with the population of underemployed. This population has traditionally been hard to engage with because they are typically working and unable to access services during traditional working hours of front-line staff. The WVVDB and CLEO Consortium members are very interested in outreach strategies associated with this population, and the WVVDB staff have already taken steps to identify how to do this. An ALICE survey was coordinated by the United Way Roanoke Valley to survey the region on the effects of COVID-19 on citizens that are Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed. The WVVDB requested additional questions be added to address workforce needs of these individuals to have a better idea of how to reach this population. The hope is to come up with outreach strategies to better engage with this population and provide workforce services to them in meaningful and accessible ways. This includes the potential to expand hours at the Virginia Career Works Centers or offer services/events at times beyond the traditional 9-5.

In general, out-of-work individuals are the target population for the system to try to help them navigate the institutional inertia and overwhelming number of programs and services that can help them get back to work. When someone walks into the Virginia Career Works Centers or accesses the services through services like the My Journey Portal, the customer should not have to navigate all programs separately but receive assistance in meeting their needs regardless of the program that is providing the service. Using the My Journey Portal, the hope is to engage with individuals who may be nervous or overwhelmed in visiting the Virginia Career Works Centers and can be assessed and determine their need from the comfort of their own home, on their own time.

Describe how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways, consistent with the Career Pathways Definitions. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Career pathways is a key piece of the WIOA legislation, and this term is frequently used when discussing best practices and program models with front-line staff. While an individual typically expresses their desire to find employment, it's important that the system assist individuals in obtaining employment that provides a career pathway toward middle- and high-skilled occupations in their chosen industry. The WVVDB is currently in the process of developing materials and data surrounding career pathways in each of the target sectors that will assist front-line staff from any agency in promoting the target industries as well as the career pathways in those industries. This information will be stored on the regional website (www.vcwblueridge.com) and will also include videos that are being produced in partnership with local businesses to showcase careers and opportunities within those businesses. These pathways and videos will assist economic development partners in promoting career opportunities in the region and assist the Virginia Career Works Centers and the workforce development system in showcasing available career opportunities in the region.

Career Quest is another program that the WVVDB is implementing with local and discretionary funding to drive youth (as young as middle school) to understand career pathways and opportunities in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands. The first event took place in September 2019 and had over 4,000 7th grade students from around the region and in the New River Valley exposed to career opportunities that would provide family-sustaining wages and

employment in their hometown. It also helped to show that not all careers require a 4-year - degree and some pathways are supported by the employer during an individual's employment. The Career Quest event is an annual event that the schools have requested be ongoing and more effort taken to educate parents on the career pathways available for their children in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands.

Describe how the local board will utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs to maximize efficiencies and use of resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Co-enrollment among the core programs is discussed in the federal WIOA legislation and was further stressed with the alignment of the federal negotiated performance measurements for Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV programs. This has encouraged the Blue Ridge region to look at opportunities for co-enrollment and to analyze customer flow to ensure that co-enrollment is taking place whenever possible. Among the WIOA Title I programs, staff have recently begun co-enrolling Title I Youth participants into the Title I Adult program, where possible, to allow for the Adult program to fund any Occupational Skills Training that is requested, while the Title I Youth program provides Work Experience/Internship or On-the-Job Training opportunities that align with the skills acquired in training. This has allowed the development of a model that will allow participants to gain training and experience with their new skills to increase the chances that they will gain self-sufficient employment in their field of training.

Co-enrollment is also being encouraged and implemented between the Title I and Title II programs, focusing on opportunities to provide Integrated Education and Training. Individuals who are entering Occupational Skills Training are provided basic skills, digital literacy, and workplace readiness training by Title II partners which allows better chances for successful completion by the student. The Blue Ridge region is looking for additional opportunities to provide this model of integrated training, more commonly known as the PluggedIn model. It also allows for the programs to leverage Title II and Title I funding to serve more participants in the region.

The Title I Dislocated Worker program continues to follow the requirement that at least 50% of individuals in the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) program be co-enrolled in the Title I Dislocated Worker program. It is anticipated that this percentage will increase to reflect a better partnership between the programs, and the WDWDB staff has been preparing for this increase. At the last report, the region was achieving more than a 64% co-enrollment between the two programs, which is expected to increase. This further shows the benefit of leveraging dollars between federal programs to ensure that more customers are receiving assistance to reach their employment and/or education goals.

Describe the One-Stop delivery system in the local area

The One Stop delivery system in the region has evolved over time and has reached a point of fluid service delivery between the partners to serve the region's job seekers and businesses. With three physical locations and many ways to access services virtually, the awareness of the services that the Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge system provide has increased over the last four years and more targeted efforts are planned to further increase awareness and reach high-risk populations.

The local board's efforts to 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 workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

Service providers that are contracted with the WVVDB for any service provision under WIOA Title I include high standards for service delivery as well as performance related to their activities under the contract. While these include standard performance such as the federal negotiated levels for WIOA Title I, the service delivery scope of work also enforces continuous improvement and evaluation. Any contracts are reviewed on at least a quarterly basis with the WVVDB and the CLEO Consortium and sometimes monthly related to expenditures, enrollments, and services provided to participants. WVVDB staff are in constant communication with service providers on performance and are also available for technical assistance. Monthly calls with the service provider take place, if not more often, to discuss performance, activities, and expenditures. Should the WVVDB or CLEO Consortium express discontent with the quality of services or the lack of continuous improvement, the service provider is informed, and corrective action plans are developed to improve prior to taking formal action such as disallowed costs or termination of the contract.

How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]

The WVVDB staff have been very cognizant of ensuring that the entire region is served rather than focusing on the more urban areas of the City of Roanoke. While funding decreases have threatened the closure of affiliate American Job Centers in the region, the WVVDB and CLEO Consortium have made a commitment to having the Virginia Career Works – Covington Center and the Virginia Career Works – Franklin Center open and available due to the distance from the Roanoke Center and the rural nature of the outlying counties. While these Centers are in place, there are still individuals living in rural parts of the region that are not able to visit the Centers in person due to lack of transportation, lack of childcare, and other barriers. The WVVDB staff is currently working with locations in each of the regions to set up access computer stations in other rural areas so that individuals do not have to travel to receive services. The addition of the online scheduling software and the utilization of Zoom and FaceTime has also increased the amount of service being provided to outlying areas. Individuals are able to set up one-on-one appointments online using their home computer or mobile phone, and are able to speak directly with staff at the Virginia Career Works Centers who will assist them in receiving services in a convenient location or manner.

How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)]

All of the American Job Centers (Virginia Career Works Centers) in the region have been evaluated for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, WIOA Section 188, and other programmatic requirements for accessibility. The WVVDB and CLEO Consortium believe that access to services for all individuals is critical regardless of potential accommodations that may be requested.

Physical Accessibility - The three Virginia Career Works Centers in the region have all been evaluated for compliance with ADA by the Blue Ridge Independent Living Center. The reports

that were released regarding the on-site evaluation were reviewed and any suggestions by the reviewer were implemented to ensure that the sites were doing everything possible to provide accessibility to services for individuals in need of accommodations. These reviews took place in 2017 and no drastic changes to the buildings or customer flow have occurred. The Centers are all equipped with services to assist individuals in need of translation or interpreter services, and all Centers also have accessible computer stations that provide JAWS, Video Relay services, and other accommodation equipment.

Remote Access - The COVID-19 global pandemic has caused the region to evaluate how services are being provided remotely or virtually to individuals to maintain social distancing the limit social gatherings per CDC guidance. All services have been made available remotely using Zoom or other methods of technology that allow for confidential video conferencing. Individuals that need accommodations to this method are always worked with in an interactive way to find a solution so that the individual can receive services. The region has implemented online schedule software through Acuity (<http://vcwblueridge.as.me>) that allows individuals to schedule one-on-one appointments with Virginia Career Works Center staff to access services. Individuals that are unable to use the system can be helped over the phone or in person at the Virginia Career Works Centers to schedule an appointment.

Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

All of the One Stop partners at the three Virginia Career Works Centers in the region enter into a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) that outlines the services as well as the financial contributions that each partner will provide toward the operations of the Virginia Career Works Centers (Infrastructure Funding Agreements). In addition to these formal contributions, partners also participate in other functions of the Virginia Career Works Centers such as the Business Solutions Teams, Management Teams, staff meetings, hiring events, rapid response events, and other special projects.

Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

All three of the Virginia Career Works Centers in the region utilize electronic sign-in methods to record traffic and customers of the Centers, as well as their need for services. Recently, the creation of the My Journey Portal has created an assessment system for the system to use for individuals who are not able to identify their need or for individuals who are not able to make it into the Virginia Career Works Centers to receive an initial assessment. This service allows for individuals to identify their demographics, educational status, potential barriers to employment, and services they wish to receive. Notification of new assessments are received by staff at the Virginia Career Works Centers and are processed to the appropriate partner. The region is also implementing the Unite Us platform that was recently endorsed by the Governor of Virginia to assist practitioners in making valuable referrals and allow for detailed outcome tracking of referrals and their employment and educational success. These two electronic systems will greatly improve the ability of the Virginia Career Works Centers and the partners of the workforce system in the Blue Ridge region to effectively serve customers without relying on antiquated systems of record that confuse the customer.

Case management systems that are used by the core programs and partner programs differ significantly, although there are ongoing discussions at the state level that may influence change within the core partners. The new data sharing agreements that have taken place at the

state level is significant progress toward sharing information between case management systems to eliminate duplication and provide better services to the participant utilizing integrated case management. Until these systems are better aligned, case management and front-line staff will continue to utilize local systems of communications (Unite Us, verbal communication, Integrated Resource Teams, Business Solutions Teams, etc.) to co-case manage customers and reduce duplication of services to customers.

Describe the services provided by each partner mandated by federal and state law, and other optional partners.

All services that are provided by the partners in the Blue Ridge regional workforce development system are detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding that is signed by all core, required, and mandated partners. This Memorandum of Understanding also includes additional partners that are critical to the mission of the local workforce development system. The attachments to the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) detail all programs and services that are provided by the particular partner entity.

Identify the Virginia Workforce Center Operator for each site in the local area.

The region has two contracts for the One Stop Operator in the region, both of which were awarded to The WorkPlace. The WorkPlace has hired a One Stop Coordinator that oversees the One Stop Centers in the region in terms of service delivery, customer service, and other operations directly related to the operation of the Resource Rooms. The Virginia Career Works – Franklin Center is owned and managed by Franklin County and the County handles the logistics of maintenance, information technology, and facilities operations. The Virginia Career Works – Covington Center is owned and managed by the Virginia Employment Commission and this agency handles the logistics of maintenance, information technology, and facilities operations.

Identify the physical locations of each comprehensive Virginia Workforce Center in the local area, and the co-location strategy for each center (current and planned).

There is only one Comprehensive American Job Center location in the region, known under the statewide branding as Virginia Career Works Centers.

Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center This location is located at 3601 Thirlane Road NW, Suite 2, Roanoke, VA 24019 and is located within the City of Roanoke. This is the only **comprehensive** American Job Center in the region and is co-located with the full regional office of the Virginia Employment Commission. This facility also has Roanoke Valley Alleghany Region 5 Adult Education (Title II), the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (Vocational Rehabilitation), Virginia Western Community College (Carl D. Perkins), Goodwill Industries of the Valleys (Senior Community Services Employment Program – Title V), Total Action for Progress (YouthBuild), Job Corps, and the Department of Social Services co-located on-site.

If applicable, identify the locations of Virginia Workforce Network affiliated sites, partner sites, or specialized centers.

There are two affiliate centers in the region:

Virginia Career Works – Franklin Center This located is located in the downtown Rocky Mount, VA at 50 Claiborne Avenue, Rocky Mount, VA 24151 and is an **affiliate** American Job Center. This facility is managed by Franklin County and includes on-site programs and access to programs from across the region. The Virginia Employment Commission Wagner-Peyser staff is

not located here on a full-time basis but is present at the Center once per week to provide services to job seekers. The WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are also present on an itinerant basis. The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (Title IV) and West Piedmont Adult and Career Education (Title II) are located at the Center full-time. For those programs that are not on-site on a full-time basis, access is provided to these services by an online scheduling software that staff at the Franklin Center can assist individuals in using, or individuals can access the software through their home computer or mobile phone. This connects individuals virtually with staff from the WIOA Title I or WIOA Title III programs, as well as connects them to individuals who can assist with other needs such as unemployment, supportive services, and training and education.

Virginia Career Works – Covington Center This American Job Center is an **affiliate** site and is in downtown Covington at 15 N. Maple Avenue, Covington, VA 24426. This site is managed day-to-day by the Virginia Employment Commission and is a state-owned property. WIOA Title I staff are also on-site at the location full-time, but there are no other full-time partners that are currently co-located within the building. There is access to all core and required partners, as well as those additional partners to the Memorandum of Understanding through the online scheduling software that can be access at the Center, or by the individual at home through their computer or mobile phone. There are also several partner agencies that are in downtown Covington within a two-block radius of the Virginia Career Works – Covington Center.

There are currently no additional access or partner sites located in the region, however, the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium has identified the need for access virtually to the American Job Centers (Virginia Career Works Centers) at several partner agencies in the region, including the Departments of Social Services and libraries. This is a future goal for the region and will align with the strategic plan developed by the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium.

Describe the policy, process, and criteria for issuing individual training accounts (ITAs) including any limitations on ITA amounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The WVVWDB and the CLEO have an approved policy relating the issuance of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for participants and it also includes limitations on spending per participant related to their interest and time-period of enrollment in the program. The policy can be found here: [Individual Training Account Policy](#).

If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

All customers of the WIOA Title I programs are instructed that all training and education programs are at the discretion of customer choice, however, it is the front-line staff and Career Coaches responsibility to provide information to the customer so that they make an informed choice. Participants of the WIOA Title I programs provide information to the Career Coaches that shows their interests in terms of career pathway and employment. It is the responsibility of the Career Coach to outline the training, education, and skills need to obtain occupations in or along the career pathway as well as the locations that training and education are provided. This information also includes performance of programs including successful completions, successful attainment of credentials by students, etc. When participants of the WIOA Title I programs have made their final decision of what program or curriculum they would like to complete, the participant signs a Training Policy and Selection form that signifies that they understand the training is their choice.

Describe process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

All Career Coaches and front-line staff that are allocated WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth are trained on the target sectors and in-demand industries for the region, as well as provided a list of the top occupations in those industries that are in demand. All Career Coaches have been provided training as Virginia Career Coaches that will allow them to assist individuals in entering occupations within these target industries or will allow them to assist individuals in understanding the career pathway toward these occupations. All information on the target sectors is provided on the regional website (www.vcwblueridge.com) and is updated on an annual basis to account for changes in demand, particularly with occupations.

If a participant is demonstrating a need to relocate to another area, the Career Coaches or front-line staff would provide information related to demand industries and high-demand occupations based on labor market information provided through the Virginia Employment Commission website (www.virginiaworks.com), the ONet Online database, or JobsEQ.

Describe how rapid response activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

Rapid Response activities are coordinated by the Virginia Employment Commission and work in concert with the WVVWDB business services staff and Business Solutions Teams to provide services to businesses that are facing reductions in force or closure. Two-way communication exists between the Rapid Response Coordinator for Western Virginia and the Business and Development Coordinator/Executive Director of the WVVWDB. Should a reduction in force or closure occur, the Rapid Response Coordinator is responsible for reaching out to the business to provide services. Due to relationships already established in the region, businesses may reach out to staff of the WVVWDB or the local Virginia Career Works Centers. Regardless of where contact is made, the Business Solutions Team is made aware of the need for Rapid Response services and a plan is set forth to serve the business and the employees affected by the reduction in force or closure. A Management Team meeting is convened with the business that includes the Rapid Response Coordinator and the Business and Development Coordinator or Executive Director of the WVVWDB to evaluate need and discuss process for assisting employees. Services that are offered to the business and their employees may include, but are not limited to:

- Job search assistance
- Labor market information
- Career exploration services
- Resume preparation
- Interviewing techniques and mock interviewing
- Hiring events and career fairs for employees
- Counseling services, including financial counseling
- Referrals to training programs and supportive services

Section 5: Compliance

Describe how the local board meets its responsibilities for oversight, monitoring, and corrective action for WIOA Title I programs.

Staff of the WVVWDB work diligently to successfully complete all responsibilities for oversight, monitoring, and corrective action for WIOA Title I programs. The Operations Director for the

WVWDB performs quarterly monitoring of the WIOA Title I programs throughout the year, focusing on key aspects of monitoring such as data validation, case notes, and eligibility. These are mostly desk reviews and are informal but provide an opportunity for ongoing communication, technical assistance, and accuracy throughout the program year. One of the quarterly reviews is a full on-site monitoring where a sample of WIOA Title I participant files from the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs are pulled and a full review of eligibility, documentation, verification, case notes, and expenditures is completed. This full review also includes pulling a sample month of expenditures and reviewing in detail for documentation and allowability of expenses. As part of an ongoing review, the Operations Director, in partnership with the Executive Director and the Grant Accountant of the WVWDB, completes 100% review of all monthly invoices from program providers and staff to ensure accuracy and allowability. The WVWDB staff also run reports in the Virginia Workforce Connection regularly to review and monitor data entry, documentation, and case management of WIOA Title I program staff. This allows the WVWDB staff to identify trends, concerns or best practices that can be shared with all staff to enhance service delivery and performance.

The WVWDB staff also work in partnership with the Virginia Community College System's monitoring on an annual basis which includes financial monitoring, programmatic monitoring, administrative monitoring, and Equal Opportunity monitoring. This has also included data validation in the past to assist the Virginia Community College Staff in meeting federal U.S. Department of Labor requirements.

Throughout the year, WVWDB staff request technical assistance training, calls with Virginia Community College Staff regarding best practices in program delivery, and troubleshoot the system of record, the Virginia Workforce Connection, for case management practices.

Describe how the local board conducts business in accordance with the Sunshine Provisions of WIOA staffing plans for the local board.

The WVWDB meets Sunshine Provisions of WIOA by making Board and CLEO activities available to the public. Meetings are made available and are open to the public and this includes all meetings of the WVWDB, the CLEO Consortium, Committees, and special project meetings. All agendas include a section for public comment and minutes are recorded and shared publicly via the regional website. During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings that have been held electronically are publicized publicly before hand with information on how members of the public can join virtually. For procurement, Requests for Proposals or any other requests during the procurement process are made public through media and local communications include being posted on the regional website, posted in the Roanoke Times, and distributed through the partner network and/or applicable distribution lists. Events that are held are marketed electronically via social media and newsletters, handouts, and shared via phone calls, interviews, and flyers.

Describe the methods and strategies used to ensure timely expenditure of WIOA funds.

The WVWDB recently changed the way that the organization was structured in terms of WIOA Title I funding to allow for better, more real-time monitoring of expenditures and grant funding. A change of fiscal agent from the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission to the WVWDB allows for more frequent reporting and the hiring of an internal 100% dedicated Grant Accountant to monitor WIOA Title I funds, as well as other discretionary funding received by the WVWDB. This has allowed the WVWDB staff to put into place additional measures for monitoring not only the allowability of expenditures on a more timely basis, but also to monitor and track the expenditure rates of federal funding to avoid the rescission of funding. On a

biweekly basis, the Grant Accountant provides reports on outstanding receivable and payable items to ensure that funds are being invoiced and drawn down as quick as possible. The WVVWDB staff assigned to the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs also provide a shared file with all expenditures and obligations tracked for the two programs so that both expenditures and obligations are considered when reviewing monthly reports. The Grant Accountant reports budget vs. actual expenditures monthly and a formal report is taken to the Finance Committee on a quarterly basis for review and approval prior to being sent to the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium. These additional reviews and internal processes have allowed the WVVWDB staff to be more cognizant of spending and where the expenditures should be at any given point in the year. The WVVWDB has also implemented a new technology system, Certify, that allows for expenditures approvals to be reported electronically and automatically uploaded into QuickBooks, the financial system of record for the WVVWDB. This has drastically sped up processing for expenditures and allows for 100% review of expenditures every month.

Describe the process for neutral brokerage of adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. Identify the competitive process and criteria (such as targeted services, leverage of funds, etc.) used to award funds to sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, state the names of contracted organizations, and the duration of each contract. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

Beginning in July 2020, the WVVWDB received a waiver to be the provider of Individualized Career Services and Follow-up Services for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This waiver was completed after a competitive procurement was released in February 2020 and no bidders responded to the formal Request for Proposals for qualified vendors of service. With the formal approval by the Governor's Office, the WVVWDB hired a Program Manager, 5 Career Coaches, and 1 Business Services Assistant. This method of providing Individualized Career Services and Follow-Up Services has allowed for better success of co-enrollment with other core and required partners, as well as discretionary grants that are in the region. The WIOA Title I Youth Program services were contracted with The WorkPlace until February 26, 2021, when they requested that their contract be terminated after the WVVWDB expressed discontent with their performance over the 1.5 years of operation. The use of emergency procurement policy was put into place for the WVVWDB to provide the fourteen elements of the WIOA Title I Youth Program through September 30, 2021, allowing the WVVWDB to get through the summer months, allow the COVID-19 global pandemic to slow down even further and for a competitive procurement to be released in July 2021. The hope is to have another contracted service provider beginning October 1, 2021 who will be responsible for delivering the fourteen elements of the WIOA Title I Youth program.

The One Stop Operator for the region is separated into two competitive procurement contracts. The first is for the One Stop Operator over the Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center and the Virginia Career Works – Covington Center. The second is for the One Stop Operator over the Virginia Career Works – Franklin Center. Both contracts were awarded in 2019 to The WorkPlace. The One Stop Operator contract for the Virginia Career Works – Roanoke Center and the Virginia Career Works – Covington Center also has additional leveraged funding awarded through the contract through a local grant in partnership with Total Action for Progress. This assists the One Stop Operator with providing wrap around services to customers of the One Stop System and further educating critical partners on the mission and services of the workforce development system.

The WVVWDB follows the City of Roanoke's procurement guide, as they are the Grant Recipient for the region. Competitive sealed bids are done for any provision of service delivery for the

WIOA Title I programs that must be competitively procured and are released for a minimum of 10 business days (typically longer). Notices of competitive sealed bids, or other methods of procurement such as Requests for Quotes or Requests for Information are all posted on the regional website (www.vcwblueridge.com), posted in the local community newspaper, The Roanoke Times, posting through the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, and distributed to applicable partners and other entities. Competitive procurement is overseen and reviewed by a taskforce of WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium members and then presented to the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium for approval.

Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

The fiscal agent for the federal WIOA Title I funds changed recently, with the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission ceasing as the fiscal agent as of December 31, 2020. As of January 1, 2021, the WVVWDB is the region’s fiscal agent, overseen and designated by the CLEO Consortium of the region. The Grant Recipient of the region remains the City of Roanoke, with involvement by their fiscal department in the process of receiving and expending funds. The City of Roanoke appropriates WIOA Title I funding to the Board when Notices of Obligations are received from the Virginia Community College System. The City of Roanoke also reports the federal WIOA Title I funds on their annual audit each year.

Describe the strategy used by the local board to leverage WIOA funds with other federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources.

The WVVWDB makes all efforts to leverage WIOA Title I funds with other funding sources. WVVWDB staff work closely with other partner agencies locally to ensure program funds can be braided and efficiently utilized to best serve participants. This also includes evaluating all grants, scholarships, or other discretionary funding that may reduce costs for participants to ensure the WIOA Title I funds can be stretched to serve more individuals throughout the region.

More recently, the WVVWDB has begun requesting funds from the localities each year to support additional workforce programming that does not fit within the WIOA Title I regulations. For example, this has included funding to support career exploration and exposure for middle school students in the K-12 public school systems, to increase the awareness of career pathways in the region and drive them toward high-demand industries and occupations.

The WVVWDB always looks for funding that can support and leverage current operations. This can include additional federal U.S. Department of Labor discretionary grants that are released for workforce development, other federal agency discretionary grants that relate to workforce development, and other local grants that support the efforts of the WVVWDB. The goal of additional discretionary grants is to support filling gaps in workforce service delivery and will not duplicate other programs or funding that is already in the region.

Indicate the negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

For PY2020 and PY2021, the following table depicts the negotiated local levels of performance for the WIOA Title I programs:

Performance Measure	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	85.00%	90.00%	72.30%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	85.00%	90.00%	62.80%

Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,000	\$7,600	\$3,500
Measurable Skills Gain	72.70%	66.80%	64.20%
Credential Attainment Rate	74.00%	70.00%	70.00%

Describe indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

The WVVWDB monitors performance and effectiveness of all service providers and the work of the system. With the new strategic plan in place for July 2020 through June 2024, a performance dashboard will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium to measure success of the strategic plan and the action items and strategic goals included within. Contracted service providers of WIOA Title I programs are evaluated not only on the federal negotiated performance levels, but also receive quarterly monitoring and a full review each year of their operations as compared to the contract and competitive procurement proposal. In addition to monitoring of the service providers, WVVWDB staff provides regular training, technical assistance, and oversight to ensure that the service provider is providing acceptable levels of customer service, data entry, and documentation. WVVWDB staff also complete full reviews of invoices and reimbursement requests from service providers to ensure all expenses are accurate and allowable.

The WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium receive quarterly reports regarding performance of service providers of the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and often requests additional information to determine if performance and customer service strategies are up to the standards expected. The WVVWDB has include in contracts with program provides language to ensure timely submission of invoices, timely documentation and data entry, full and accurate provision of services as provided by the WIOA Title I legislation, and communication with the WVVWDB. The One Stop delivery system is overseen by the One Stop Coordinator, who is employed by The WorkPlace. The WorkPlace is the competitively procured One Stop Operator for all three of the Virginia Career Works Centers in the region. Partners and WVVWDB staff, as well as members of the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium, ensure that the service delivery performance of the One Stop system is efficient and customer friendly by reviewing customer satisfaction, processes, procedures, data on the visitors and customers served and more on a regular basis. The WVVWDB also works diligently to ensure that the Virginia Career Works Centers in the region achieve One Stop Center Certification status, as determined by the criteria set forth by the Virginia Community College System. Beyond those requirements, each Virginia Career Works Center in the region has a Management Team that meets monthly to review processes and procedures for continuous improvement and collaboration.

Provide a description of any replicated cooperative agreements with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

The WVVWDB currently does not have any cooperative agreements related to the provision of services for these populations. The WVVWDB does, however, have very close relationships with community partners who serve these populations, including the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Department for Blind and Visually Impaired, the Blue Ridge Independent Living Center and staff with the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Community College System who are experts in service delivery for this population. The One Stop Coordinator works to ensure that all staff providing services under the Virginia Career

Works umbrella are aware of and have access to expertise in ways to enhance service provision to individuals with disabilities and other customers. The WVVWDB works to ensure that all customers, regardless of ability, receive services equally. Part of this effort is a continuous review of accessibility of facilities and program services. Furthermore, our Business Services Team works with employers to ensure all job seekers receive coordinated services. Our Business Services Team includes staff from the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services who are experts in working with employers to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The WVVWDB staff also seek additional training to ensure services are provided in a manner that is welcoming and effectively serving all customers.

Describe the actions the local board will take towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board

The strategic plan and the local plan development for the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium both outline goals and strategies that the region will take to become the premier talent development resource in the region. This effort will be led by the WVVWDB and the WVVWDB and will be implemented over the next four years. The WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium have created action items related to the goals and strategies of the strategic plan and will evaluate the performance of the region in achieving these goals on a quarterly basis. The success of achieving the performance of the strategic plan, the negotiated federal performance for the WIOA Title I programs and other programs for discretionary funding, successful attainment of additional funding to support workforce efforts, successful operation and service through the Virginia Career Works Centers, and high levels of customer service satisfaction will allow the WVVWDB to consider themselves a “high-performing board”.

Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan and providing public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans. If any comments received that represent disagreement with the plan were received, please include those comments here. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)]

The first part of the process in developing this local plan was for the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium to undertake a strategic planning process. This process including the hiring of a third-party facilitator to assist the WVVWDB and CLEO Consortium in holding strategic planning sessions virtually, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, to conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis and further develop the overarching strategic goals and action items for the regional workforce development system. The local plan is developed off of the strategic plan, which was done in partnership with the WVVWDB, the partners, and more. Surveys were provided to all stakeholders in the process to provide an opportunity for feedback on WVVWDB goals, operations, Virginia Career Works Centers operations, and more. The local plan was released for public comment and posted on the regional website at www.vcwblueridge.com, in the Roanoke Times, distributed to all partners to the MOU, economic development offices, local elected officials, the WVVWDB, and more. This includes a wide network of partners and stakeholders that include business, labor organizations, and education partners. Any public comments that were received through the public comment process were included in the final local plan that was approved by a joint meeting of the WVVWDB and the CLEO Consortium on March 19th. All public comments were also responded to as an addendum to the local plan.

Describe professional staff development strategies, including:

Process used to ensure staff receive continuous training in workforce development practices

There are many types of professional development that is provided to not only the employees of the WVVWDB, but also the entire workforce development system in the region. The COVID-19 global pandemic has allowed for the use of virtual equipment and tools to conduct more frequent and accessible trainings. For example, the One Stop Coordinator recently set up trainings on a monthly basis that provide presentations from key partners on programmatic opportunities, changes, or additions to encourage referrals and program usage. The comprehensive Roanoke Center has also been providing training during the monthly staff meetings that occur, which can be accessed virtually by all staff in the region. Examples of trainings that have occurred have been case management/counseling training provided by the Jobs for Veterans State Grants staff, and stress management training.

All staff are encouraged to attend conferences and training provided by the Virginia Community College System, Department of Labor, WorkforceGPS, professional organizations such as the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals and the National Association of Workforce Directors. WVVWDB staff also provide training to WIOA Title I staff on a regular basis, either monthly or bi-monthly, to review policies and procedures and to provide updates and ongoing enhancements to service delivery. All technical assistance that is provided by the Virginia Community College System is attended by staff as well. All Career Coaches for the WIOA Title I programs are also put through Virginia Career Coach training that is provided by the local community college staff. This training provides them additional resources and training to be able to provide career coaching elements to their participants in the WIOA Title I programs.

Another statewide training that has been implemented across the Commonwealth has been related to Career Pathways and Sector Strategies. This effort is being embraced by all the workforce development system partners at the state level and is being encouraged at the local level by the WVVWDB staff. Many staff have had the opportunity to go through this training and those that have not will do so in the next year.

Another opportunity that is available for individuals that desire to go further in their professional development would be the certification as a National Workforce Development Professional, or Certified Workforce Development Professional. This certification is based on competencies and is done through the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. Several individuals throughout the region are certified through this body and this option is available to those professionals that wish to continue their education and credentials in workforce development.

Methods to ensure effective use of the Virginia Workforce Connection system of record and to adhere to timely data entry requirements for WIOA services

The Virginia Workforce Connection is promoted as the only system of record and has been embraced by the WVVWDB fully, as all case files and documentation for the WIOA Title I programs is now electronic. Beginning July 1, 2020, no paper files were created for new participants in the WIOA Title I programs and all eligibility documentation, forms, and more were uploaded and attached to the participant in the Virginia Workforce Connection. The Operations Director for the WVVWDB runs reports monthly to show that timely data entry is being completed and follows Virginia Board of Workforce Development policy, Virginia Workforce Letter policy, and/or local policy. These reports include soon to exit reports, system closure reports, dates since last case note reports, and more. All staff are trained extensively on the Virginia

Workforce Connection when hired by both Virginia Community College System staff and local system administrator staff to ensure an understanding of the importance of the system and the interworking of the case management database.

Process to measure staff performance and delivery of high-quality customer service

Customer service satisfaction is one of the most importance pieces of information that is captured from customers that visit the Virginia Career Works Centers or receive services through any partner of the workforce development system. Customer satisfaction surveys are provided to all customers of the workforce development system and reviewed monthly by the Management Teams at each of the Virginia Career Works Centers. Should negative customer satisfaction surveys be submitted and need addressing prior to the monthly management team meeting, the One Stop Coordinator, who is charge of compiling and reviewing all results, may present the survey to the appropriate manager of the applicable partner agency so that it can be addressed as soon as possible. Customer satisfaction survey results are also presented to the Program Oversight Committee on a quarterly basis to ensure that the WWWDB and CLEO Consortium are abreast should any issue arise. Customer satisfaction surveys are not used negatively but are looked at as a way to ensure that continuous improvement is at the forefront of the minds of the Management Team, the One Stop Coordinator, the front-line staff, and the WWWDB and the CLEO Consortium.

Process to meet and maintain staff certification and Virginia Workforce Center certification as required by Virginia Workforce Council Policy 300-06

All staff are required to be training to ensure that they can perform the duties of their employment to the highest standard. All staff in the regional workforce system are supported by the partner agencies and their employment agency and provided the most training necessary during orientation as well as ongoing throughout their career. The One Stop Coordinator provides a Center Orientation to all new staff, regardless of employment agency, to ensure that staff are aware of key requirements for service delivery, including equal opportunity and non-discrimination, providing accommodations to individuals with disabilities or other populations that request such accommodations, training on key equipment for accommodations such as Video Relay, the TTY phone, and more, and general information on the partners and the programs they offer.

Attachments

Attachment A: Chief Local Elected Officials Consortium Agreement

Attachment B: CLEO Board Agreement

Attachment C: WWWDB Organizational Chart

All policies of the WWWDB can be found on the regional website at:

<https://www.vcwblueridge.com/about/documents/>

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 Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, its attendant regulations and the applicable state laws and policies. We further certify that the plan was developed by the local workforce development board in partnership with the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO) Consortium, and with the benefit of an open and inclusive plan development process and the required public comment period.

Local Area Name/#:	Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge Local Workforce Development Area 3
Local Plan Point of Contact:	Morgan Romeo, Executive Director
Address:	4419 Pheasant Ridge Road, Suite 301 Roanoke, VA 24014
Phone/Email:	(540) 562-8442 x 201 mromeo@vcwblueridge.com

Signature	Date
The Honorable Martha Hooker	CLEO Consortium Chair
Printed Name	Title

Signature	Date
Mr. Casey Nicely	WVWDB Chair
Printed Name	Title

The Chief Local Elected Officials Consortium designates the following entity as fiscal agent:

Entity:	Western Virginia Workforce Development Board
Contact:	Morgan Romeo, Executive Director
Address:	4419 Pheasant Ridge Road, Suite 301 Roanoke, VA 24014
Phone/Email:	(540) 562-8442 x 201 mromeo@vcwblueridge.com