



BLUE RIDGE REGION

Commonwealth of Virginia
Return to Earn Initiative
Updated September 10, 2021

On June 11, 2021, Governor Northam announced the Return to Earn initiative, focused on assisting small businesses with providing new hires up to \$1,000 to support their transition back into the workforce. The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWDB) has received \$105,624 to support small businesses in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands, including businesses in the Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke and the Cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem.

Funding Criteria:

- The initiative will reimburse up to \$500 that a qualifying small business pays directly to a new employee hired after May 31, 2021, with a maximum of 25 new hires per employer. Small businesses may provide larger hiring bonuses to new hires in association with the Return to Earn Program, but the state will only reimburse up to \$500 per employee.
- Only employers with fewer than 100 employees across all Virginia locations may qualify for funds. The employment facility where the new hires will be placed must be located in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the employer must also be incorporated in Virginia.
- Wages for new hires must be a minimum of \$15.00 per hour. The position must be W-2 employment but can be part- or full-time. Funds may only be provided to new employees hired by the employer, and the individual hired must be currently unemployed (as attested by the individual) and have been unemployed for at least one month (30 calendar days). The new employees hired must attest to being unemployed for one month (30 calendar days) or longer. This will not be verified by the WVWDB.
- It is strongly recommended that businesses do not provide the funds to the new hire until the new hire has remained with the company for at least three months. LWDA's are not required to verify the length of employment of the new hire.
- Any one individual may receive only one hiring bonus.
- New hires must be hired on no later than December 31, 2021.

Funding Agreement:

An agreement will be made between the WVWDB and the employer directly. Businesses will be required to submit information for screening for eligibility, including the total number of employees, employer FEIN, wage information, position titles, and more. A formal agreement will be completed with the business once eligibility has been determined. Only an authorized signatory will be eligible to sign the agreement on behalf of the business.

Once a hire has been made, the business will request funding from the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board by submitting a formal funding request that will include the following information:

- Employee Name
- Position Title
- Hiring Date
- Amount of Hiring Support Provided
- Hourly Wage
- Self-attestation from the employee verifying that they have been unemployed for one month (30 calendar days) or longer
- Start Date
- Employee Classification (Full-time or Part-time)

Other Information:

- Businesses that are currently disbarred from receiving federal or state funds are not eligible to receive funds through the Return to Earn project.
- Businesses must be up-to-date and current on all state obligations.
- Funds will be rescinded from businesses and collection action will be initiated if future audit activity determines violation of any terms of the signed agreement, including any false statements.
- Funding for this program must meet the terms and conditions set forth by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I funds.

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aides and services and interpreters are available upon request. TDD-VA Relay: 711. Morgan Romeo | EO Officer | mromeo@vcwblueridge.com | 540-562-8442

This project is 100% funded by an award from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I grant (AA-34799-20-55-A-51) in the amount of \$105,624. This award was made to the City of Roanoke on behalf of Local Workforce Development Area 3 – Blue Ridge by the pass-through entity, the Virginia Community College System. No costs of these programs are financed by non-governmental sources.