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Star City Works Program Launches to Support Roanoke City Businesses and Job Seekers

Roanoke, VA – The Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board, formerly the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, is excited to announce the launch of the *Star City Works* program, funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocated through the City of Roanoke. In September 2021, the Star City Strong Taskforce identified funding recommendations for the ARPA dollars received by the City of Roanoke, including \$3 million devoted to identifying the needs of employers in high-growth, high-potential sectors and gaps that may exist in the local workforce. It was also recommended that the funding be used to align development and training programs for unemployed, underemployed, and youth to secure the skills and credentials necessary to fill the gaps in the local workforce. The City of Roanoke has entered into an agreement with the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board to administer the designated funding for workforce, creating the *Star City Works* program. Activities that will be available to serve businesses and job seekers located within the City of Roanoke include funding for existing workers to receive training, funding to provide customized training to secure new employees, tuition dollars for individuals to attend training and education, work-based learning opportunities including internships, on-the-job training reimbursement, and wrap-around supportive services (transportation, childcare, food assistance, utility/mortgage assistance, etc.) to assist individuals in completing training and employment activities.

“We are thrilled to be able to announce the new *Star City Works* program for residents and businesses of the City of Roanoke,” said Morgan Romeo, Executive Director of the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board. “This initiative funded by the City of Roanoke is a great example of how local government can leverage the funding received through the ARPA programs to enhance workforce development activities. We look forward to administering the funding for the City of Roanoke and leveraging the *Star City Works* program with other programs within the workforce development system to provide a successful talent pipeline for businesses in our region.”

“ARPA funding is intended to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. The Mayor and City Council seek to leverage these funds to respond in a transformational manner. Few things could be more transformational than to take those in our community that find themselves unemployed and underemployed in this post-pandemic environment and equip them with the skills and training sought by employers in our community who struggle with finding a sufficient workforce. We are pleased to see this funding going to such a meaningful purpose,” said Bob Cowell, City Manager for the City of Roanoke.

Businesses or job seekers that are interested in learning more about the Star City Works program can email starcityworksva@gmail.com or contact the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board at (540) 562-8442.

About the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board

The Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board (GRWDB) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves to oversee and provide strategic leadership and convening for the regional workforce development system in the Roanoke Valley and the Alleghany Highlands. Serving eight localities, the GRWDB administers federal, state, and local funding for workforce development activities including job training, employment placement, and support services to businesses and job seekers in the region to support economic development and workforce needs.

The Greater Roanoke 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

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