



Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board

Program Oversight Committee

February 12, 2025

1:00 PM

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82144911677?pwd=UTNiJqfvQbfXi2vzkGALpf9OenHdok.1>

Members	Present
Abby Hamilton, Chair	X
Joe Brinley	X
Joe Cobb	X
Karen Michalski-Karney	X
Maiya Ashby	X
Stephanie Hoer	X
Kimberly Dameron	

GRWDB Staff	Present
Leah Gibson	X
Emma Howard-Woods	X
Stephanie Martin	X
Morgan Romeo	X

Call to Order

Abby Hamilton called the meeting to order at 12:58

Public Comment

There was no public comment

Meeting Minutes Approval

Abby Hamilton asked the group to review the minutes from the last meeting.

Program Oversight Committee Action: A motion was made by Karen Michalski-Karney to approve the minutes as presented. Stephanie Hoer seconded the motion. The motion was carried by a vote.

Center Reports

Roanoke Center

Leah shared that the new Roanoke Center location is almost complete. It has full utilities, and all construction has been completed. The only remaining piece is the lease, which hasn't been signed by the state, and is holding up the VEDA installation. Without this, state employees, including VA Works staff can't move in. Everything that can be done in advance of this is being done, the Resource Room is fully ready, and Roy is already set up in the new facility. We have a tentative grand opening date of March 18th.

Covington Center

Leah shared that that the Covington Center was up for sale and had a January 31st, 2025 bid deadline. Morgan has asked for an update on the sale, but has not received any information yet. Until otherwise noted, it will continue operations as normal.

Franklin Center

Leah shared that the Franklin Center has been under evaluation from some time both from the Franklin County Government as well as key center partners, including the GRWDB. Over time, the vision and goals for the center have shifted, leading to the question of whether or not to continue to operate the Franklin Center as a Virginia Career Works affiliate center.

Morgan shared that in the move toward fiscal stability, keeping the Franklin Center as a Virginia Career Works affiliate Center does not make sense. The Franklin Center currently doesn't meet all the criteria for the certification, so the team has decided to remove the affiliation. This will not remove services from Franklin County, and instead services will be offered at mobile access points, of which the Franklin Center can be one. Morgan has asked the Dept. of Labor for guidelines and best practices for mobile access points, to ensure that the Franklin Center, and any other mobile access points potentially including the Covington Center, are able to successfully provide services.

Stephanie Hoer commented that transitioning towards a mobile access point model is a good solution for such a complex issue.

New Business

ETPL Applications

Leah shared the new ETPL application that was received from QS Academy, a Texas based online learning training provider offering healthcare and IT training solutions. Their application meets all requirements, and have provided all verifications needed.

Program Oversight Committee Action: A motion was made by Karen to take the QA Academy Application to the Board for approval. Maiya Ashby seconded the motion. The motion was carried by a vote.

Eligibility Policy

Leah shared that the Eligibility Policy was discussed at the last Board meeting, and that there was discussion about the criteria for youth in need of additional assistance being potentially discriminatory. In light of recent executive orders, this criteria has been removed from the policy to ensure appropriate guidelines are being followed. With this change, the Eligibility Policy is back at the Program Oversight Committee for review to go back to the Board. The other existing changes include the change to the state policy reference, and additional language about suitability for funding.

The group shared their agreement with the decision to remove the youth eligibility criteria, and wants to ensure all policies are in line with federal guidance. Leah also shared that the removal of the specific criteria shouldn't have a measurable impact on qualifying youth for the program, as they would likely meet another one of the criteria needed. Leah also shared that the GRWDB team is reviewing all policies and procedures to make sure guidance is being followed, and the Dept. of Labor will be monitoring the GRWDB this spring, so anything missed will be addressed as needed.

Program Oversight Committee Action: A motion was made by Karen to approve the Eligibility Policy changes as presented. Stephanie Hoer seconded the motion. The motion was carried by a vote.

Branding Update

Leah shared that there has been a decision at the state level to rebrand all Virginia Career Works Centers to Virginia Works Centers. This decision is very important as signage for the new Roanoke Center still needs to be purchased. There has been an ask of the State Board to allocate funding for this rebrand. This rebrand is for American Job Centers only, and will not impact workforce board branding.

Morgan also shared that marketing research showed little public awareness of the current brand (Virginia Career Works), and that there have been at least 4 rebrands in the last 10 years.

Maiya asked when the new branding will be sent out. Morgan shared that if the funding is approved by the State Board on March 28th, and VA Works takes immediate action in April, then there will be about 3 months to spend the rebrand funding. Morgan has also made the ask to bring in a marketing consultant to assist with the rebrand.

Abby asked if the logo was changing as well. Morgan shared that yes, the logo is changing too. The state will likely provide a style guide complete with logos, fonts, colors, and other requirements for branding.

Abby asked if there will be a gap between the new branding decision and funding and the opening of the new Roanoke Center. Leah shared that yes, there will be a gap, and that the team is exploring ways to provide temporary signage to bridge the gap.

Outreach Plan

Emma shared that the GRWDB team is starting to work on a regional outreach plan, that will include core partners, and will allow for shared outreach efforts within the workforce system. As the outreach plan is being developed, a small team of representatives from core partners will be selected to work with Emma on developing the plan, allowing for replicable outreach strategies to be implemented across organizations.

Grants Update

Morgan shared an overview of current discretionary grants held by the GRWDB. The OnRamp Grant, in partnership with TAP and United Way, provides whole family supports to address barriers for families needing services. The DSS Grant, in partnership with DSS, TAP, and Goodwill, connects individuals with dependents to employment services to help address the benefits cliff while reducing the need for public assistance.

Morgan also shared an update on new grants the GRWDB is considering applying for. The GRWDB currently has a planning grant for Americorp to provide support in preparing for the implementation grant application. However, the implementation grant came out sooner than expected, and at the time when the federal funding freeze was taking place. This meant that the GRWDB was unable to secure the non-federal match funds needed for the application. The decision has been made with Serve Virginia that the GRWDB wait for the next round of implementation grants, providing more time to secure the match funds. If awarded, this grant would provide Americorp members in rural access points to provide skills building services to job seekers in rural Virginia.

Morgan also shared that the GRWDB team is considering applying for the Community Development Block Grant as well as the new Inspire grant. Inspire would be in collaboration with the Alleghany Highlands Community Service Board, who would be able to provide case management supportive services to participants in or seeking recovery from Substance Use Disorders.

Another grant up for consideration is the Rural Business Development Grant, which would provide additional Incumbent Worker Training funds for businesses in most of the GRWDB localities, except for the Cities of Salem and Roanoke. Morgan shared that Toni McLawhorn, the GRWDB Business and Development Manager, has done an excellent job of marketing this service to the business community, and is in need of additional funds.

The READY Nonprofit Grant is another grant under the Appalachian Regional Commission, providing capacity building for nonprofits in the Appalachian region. This would provide Morgan and Leah with training in the fields of grant writing, grant management, and human capital.

Lastly, the GRWDB is seeking locality funding from all localities served. This funding will support career pathways development, and is asking \$.25 per capita from all localities.

Morgan also provided an update on the current WIOA Adult funding, which is running low earlier than anticipated. Due to the close partnership of Carilion and their Grow Your Own

program, the GRWDB Bootcamps, and a general increase in referrals, there is a very limited amount of funding to support the adult program through the end of the fiscal year. The team is evaluating other funding opportunities to supplement the remaining funds, but it is likely that the team will need to limit enrollments and/or adult spending through the end of June. Morgan shared that this will be discussed at the upcoming Board meeting, and that by then she hopes there is a better idea of funding that will actually be available.

Leah added that this restriction only applies to funding things like training and supportive services, but that participants will still be eligible for non-funded services like job search.

Maiya shared that this should be a full discussion at the board level, but that she is in support of finding a creative solution to limit funding spent through June. Abby agreed, and asked how to determine the best way to spend the remaining funds. Morgan agreed that a financial management plan is needed, but that the team is open to discussing multiple options for determining funding obligations.

Stephanie Hoer asked if the remaining funds include the funds needed to carry forward. Morgan shared that the remaining dollars are what is left in the adult budget through June 2025, and doesn't include anything else like personnel or fringe costs. Morgan also shared that Congress already passed the budget, but that there is a chance that funds could be rescinded since the GRWDB fiscal year doesn't align with the Federal fiscal year.

Karen suggested that Morgan and Leah develop a few different options for ways to limit spending or restrict enrollments to bring to the upcoming Board meeting. Maiya agreed and added that the Program Oversight Committee could provide feedback on the options to bring to the Board as well. Morgan and Leah agreed to create some options.

Abby asked if the GRWDB is applying for YouthBuild. Morgan shared that the RFA has not come up yet.

Programs Report

Stephanie Martin shared the Programs Report. Data included is through December 2024. The committee had already discussed the adult program. Stephanie shared that the DLW numbers are low, as it is hard to meet eligibility criteria, but that every participant is being screened for this program. She also shared that the team is in communication with Goodyear due to the layoffs in Danville.

Stephanie also shared that the youth program has low enrollment, but shared hope for upcoming enrollments as the team continues to create bootcamps, which are an effective way of getting youth enrolled in the WIOA program. There are several bootcamps currently being developed, including a Craig/Botetourt Infrastructure camp in early June, a Healthcare camp in April or May, and several Roanoke City camps as a part of the Summer Youth Initiative that the GRWDB has taken over this year. More information on these camps will come soon, as dates and logistics are still being worked on.

Stephanie also shared excitement for the Community Development Block Grant, as it would provide a capacity building for the youth program, and help build strategic programming and resource mapping in Roanoke City, that would be replicable in other localities. Leah shared gratitude towards Stephanie, who has done an excellent job at adjusting to the Program Manager position since Elizabeth Mann's resignation.

Abby asked about Career Quest. Emma shared that we are generally happy with the business turnout, and that it has been difficult to recruit businesses in the past. Morgan shared that the schools did not provide as many students as estimated. Several schools, including Montgomery, brought significantly less, as low as 8%, of estimated students. Some schools, like Botetourt County and Salem, set up the trip as mandatory, and require parents to "opt out" rather than give permission, leading to increased students. Other schools reported that advanced placement teachers make it hard for students to miss class, leading to reduced participation. Craig County High School did not come at all, and didn't communicate with the team at all until after the fact.

Maiya shared that she will be attending a roundtable with Ben Cline next week, and offered to pass along any information. Morgan agreed to follow up with her via email.

Upcoming Meetings

Program Oversight Committee Meeting- May 21, 2025, 2:00 PM, In-person, Location TBD

Adjournment

Abby Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 2:04