

## Workforce Demand-Based Strategic Plan

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

**Western Virginia Workforce Development Board**  
**Area III Strategic Plan 2004-2009**  
*Data Updated 2-04*

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## **Section 1 – PLAN AND OVERVIEW**

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### ***WIA Area III***

Virginia Workforce Investment Area III consists of eight (8) jurisdictions that comprise the Fifth Planning District plus Franklin County. This area, served by the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, covers 2,329 square miles and a population of 311,880.

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Population</b>
City of Covington	6	6,303
City of Roanoke	43	94,911
City of Salem	15	24,747
Alleghany County & Clifton Forge	448	17,225
Botetourt County	543	30,496
Craig County	331	5,091
Franklin County	712	47,286
Roanoke County	251	85,778

Source: US Census 2000

The total service delivery area constitutes a single continuous geographic area, consisting of the City of Covington, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Craig County, Franklin County, and Roanoke County.

### ***Developing a Plan***

The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the 2001-2002 Strategic Plan on November 22, 2002. Board staff and the Strategic Planning Committee then gathered suggestions from the Workforce Development Board, the Youth Council, and the Executive Committee. Local elected officials, members of the CLEO Consortium, board partners, stakeholders, and a broad range of members of the community were invited to attend a public forum on the strategic plan on Friday, December 6, 2002, during which, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Directors gathered directed input from those present. The forum was well attended and included representatives from the United Way, Bluefield College, Lee Hecht Harrison, Experience Works, RR Donnelly, Manpower, Job Corps, Roanoke City Schools, College of Health Sciences, Roanoke College, Virginia Western Community College, Project Train-IT, City of Roanoke Economic Development, Employer Support Guard & Reserve, Roanoke Higher Education Center, TAP-This Valley Works, Dabney Lancaster Community College, Carilion Health System, the Virginia Employment Commission, Roanoke County Parks & Recreation, and the National College of Business & Technology.

Workforce Development Board (WDB) Committees were asked to review portions of the plan and provide input. The Executive Committee, Youth Council and One-Stop Consortium Operators reviewed the information needed and supplied data for plan revisions.

The approved Strategic Plan was distributed to WDB members, all Workforce Center partners, Youth Council members and other stakeholders in Area III including educational institutions and training providers. It was advertised as available for review at all local government offices and public library headquarters. The plan is posted on the web site. The Executive Committee will develop objectives from the plan for each committee, the One-Stop Consortium Operators and the Youth Council.

The strategic role of the Workforce Development Board is to develop the long-range vision for workforce development in the area and bring all the organizations involved in workforce development together to coordinate activities. The development of the long-range vision involved coordination of activities and resources among multiple areas and many service delivery organizations to ensure the vision would be implemented. It required bringing the players together with a common mission and a commitment to working together. The vision

was developed as a cooperative project by all partners including economic development organizations (all local economic development organizations have representation on the economic development committee and have had input into this plan) in Area III to ensure that the current and future workforce needs of the area are met. The vision was developed in support of the state vision.

**Our Vision**

*The vision of the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board is to cultivate a dynamic workforce development system that stimulates economic development in Western Virginia and promotes a culture of lifelong learning.*

**Performance Measure Levels**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2001-02</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>
Adult Entered Employment Rate	72	73	74
Adult Retention Rate at 6 months	78	79	80
Adult Average Earnings Change	\$2600	\$2650	\$2730
Adult Employment and Credential Rate	60	61	62
Dislocated Worker Entered Employment Rate	77	78	79
Dislocated Worker Employment Retention Rate at 6 Months	90	91	92
Dislocated Worker Earnings Replacement Rate in 6 Months	90	91	92
Dislocated Worker Employment and Credential Rate	60	61	62
Older Youth Entered Employment Rate	65	66	67
Older Youth Employment Retention Rate	76	77	78
Older Youth Average Earnings Change in 6 Months	\$2300	\$2350	\$2430
Older Youth Credential Rate	50	51	52
Younger Youth Skill Attainment Rate	72	73	74
Younger Youth Diploma or Equivalent Attainment	55	56	57
Younger Youth Retention Rate	54	55	56
Customer Satisfaction-Employer	66	67	68
Customer Satisfaction-Participant	68	69	70

**Section 2 – ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CONDITIONS**

**Economic Sectors Predicted To Grow**

As with the rest of America in our “post-industrial economy,” the service sector continues to expand. Employment opportunities in healthcare services, retailing, wholesale trade, personal services, transportation and communications continue to increase.

In the *1999 Industry Cluster Analysis of the Fifth Planning District*, the following industry clusters had expanded the most over the last two decades: health care, transportation related manufacturing, opto-electronics, transportation services, and computer services.

The Stakeholders identified the following areas as having the most growth potential:

- Services for aging
- Hospitality Industry
- Healthcare Providers
- Security
- Information Technology/ Software
- Development
- Military
- Electro/Optic
- Telecommunications-wireless, radio frequency
- Robotics
- Passenger Transportation Services
- Foreign Language Interpreters
- Childcare

Listed below are the service areas with their accompanying percentage of projected growth for the ten-year period – 1998-2008:

Service	Expected % Growth	Increase in Number of Jobs
<b>Local &amp; Interurban Passenger Transit</b>	33.60	128
<b>Transportation Services</b>	30.40	69
<b>Agricultural Services</b>	29.70	248
<b>Services Industry</b> (total, but majority is in health, business, government, engineering, management, and social services)	28.41	13,458
<b>Air Transport</b>	18.34	291
<b>Communications</b>	17.62	266
<b>Retail Trade</b> (total, but majority is in misc. retail, eating and drinking establishments, and auto service and dealers)	16.91	4,599
<b>Special Trade Contractors</b>	10.81	537
Finance Insurance/Real Estate (total, but majority is in insurance carriers and security and commodity brokers)	11.85	1,131
<b>Trucking &amp; Warehousing</b>	11.15	241
<b>Local Government</b> (excludes education and hospital)	12.33	592
<b>State Government</b> (excludes education and hospital)	10.71	181

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

### **Economic Sectors Predicted Decline**

The number of employment opportunities in the industrial sector of the economy has continued to decrease in recent years. The Industry Cluster Analysis Report noted the following clusters as either in a declining or low-growth position: apparel and textiles, wood products, basic and fabricated metal, chemicals and paints. The results were confirmed by the Board and its stakeholders.

Service	Expected % Decline	Decrease in Number Jobs
Apparel/Textile	33.81	473
Textile Mill Products	21.61	172
Private Household Services	21.0	59
Railroad Transportation	19.82	404
Mining	19.40	77
Primary Metal Industries	16.39	128
Agricultural Crop Production	12.4	96
Federal Government (Excl. Postal Workers)	9.04	223
Furniture & Fixtures	4.69	50

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

The Stakeholders define the following as declining employment sectors:

- Furniture
- Textiles
- Agriculture (traditional agriculture is in a transition to high tech)
- Mining

### **Economic Sectors Targeted For Attraction, Growth And Development**

The industrial marketing groups in the region have targeted the following industries for growth: biomedical research/services, transportation-related manufacturing, plastics/polymers, and information technology.

The Stakeholders identified the following sectors for attraction, growth, or development:

- High Tech
- Services for Aging
- Information Technology/ Software Development

- Military
- Electro/Optic
- Plastics and High Tech Printing
- HVAC
- Metal Industrial Fabrication
- Telecommunications-Wireless / Radio Frequency
- Motor Sport/Racing
- Robotics
- Technical Training
- Passenger Transportation Services
- Healthcare Providers
- Medical Services
- Teaching
- Engineering
- Maintenance/Technical Repair
- Distribution
- Medical Records Technology
- Packaging
- Construction
- Childcare

### ***Occupations Predicted To Increase in Demand***

For residents holding a high school diploma or less, the following occupations are predicted to increase over the next five years: cashiers, sales persons/retail, general office clerks, packaging employees, and wait staff.

For residents with some post-secondary or extensive employer training, the following occupations are predicted to increase in demand: registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, restaurant cooks, bookkeeping/accounting/auditor clerks, maintenance repairers/general utility, construction workers, and auto mechanics.

For residents possessing a bachelor's degree or higher, the following occupations are predicted to increase in demand: general managers and top executives, systems analysts, secondary school teachers, elementary school teachers, computer engineers, and medical occupations.

Occupations that involve computer-based equipment, which include manufacturing, service, and office staffing positions are expected to grow.

The Stakeholders identified these occupations for increased demand:

- High Tech
- Services for Aging
- Information Technology/ Software Development
- Military
- Electro/Optic
- Plastics and High Tech Printers
- HVAC
- Metal Industrial Fabricators
- Telecommunications-Wireless, Radio Frequency
- Packaging Employees
- Motor Sport/Racing
- Robotics
- Technical Trainers
- Passenger Transportation Services
- Healthcare Providers
- Foreign Language Interpreters
- Medical Services
- Teachers
- Technicians (who can move through various fields such as biotechnology, and information technology)
- Engineers
- Maintenance/Technical Repair
- Distribution (Truck Drivers, Forklift Operators)
- Construction Workers
- Medical Records Technologists
- Clinical Psychologists
- Childcare Providers

The Virginia Employment Commission figures predict that in the Roanoke MSA, many specific occupations can expect substantial increases in actual number of people needed to fill area positions.

Job Title	Projected % Change 1998-2008	Replacement Openings	Growth Openings	Total Openings
Cashiers	17.34	1,760	699	2,460
Salespersons, retail	15.75	1,670	774	2,440
General Office Clerks	12.15	980	428	1,410
Waiters and Waitresses	15.28	1,100	304	1,400
General Managers and Top Executives	14.72	700	591	1,290
Combined Food Prep and Service Workers	11.71	830	177	1,010
Registered Nurses	18.31	420	465	890
Hand Packers and Packagers	36.98	330	494	820
Janitors and Cleaners	14.63	470	318	790
Food Preparation Workers	11.24	650	133	780

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

### ***The Region's Ability To Address The Demand***

The Workforce Development Board, the community colleges, and the school systems have separate mechanisms (regular surveys, direct interviews, one-on-one conversations) to assess the demand for workers based on their contacts with the business community. The WDB seeks to orchestrate those efforts in a manner that will produce a thorough and consistent picture of workforce needs in the area.

The Economic Information Services Division of the Virginia Employment Commission makes projections for numerous occupations. This report is released on a regular basis. The numbers provided for our region include only the Roanoke MSA. Reports broken down by WIA area, or county by county will provide a more accurate picture of the job outlook for WIA Area III.

Many companies provide training, but have difficulty finding employees with the requisite skill sets necessary to enter training. Workforce development efforts to provide job readiness training and skills matching are an essential component to meeting workforce needs. In educating our citizens, high schools provide the basics. Area colleges, universities and vocational training facilities further enhance our ability to meet the demand for trainable employees. The training money provided by the Department of Business Assistance Workforce Training Program is helpful.

The Stakeholders suggest that we:

- Identify Resources (e.g. Funding, Supportive Service Suppliers, Training Providers)
- Match skills for Transition
- Seek alternative sources of funding to provide training
- Work with training providers to develop new models

WIA Area III is fortunate to have a wide range of training providers willing to work alongside the Workforce Development Board to fill the workforce needs of the community. The level of cooperation among area training providers and businesses in the area, and the large pool of potential employees in the region will be coordinated by the Workforce Development Board through the workforce delivery system, to fill future workforce needs. The primary difficulty we face is one of funding, as there are many trainable individuals in the area who simply do not have the financial resources to retrain for better employment. Additionally, limited workforce data inhibits our ability to accurately identify workforce needs.

### **The Workforce Investment System in WIA Area III**

#### ***Our Customers***

##### Employers

The employer customer wants a skilled, dependable, self-motivated worker that can fill immediate job vacancies. Employers want workers who will remain on the job after training has been provided and will be productive employees with mature work skills, good work ethics and attitude, and a willingness to learn. Most employers have difficulty finding suitable

employees due to factors, such as lack of appropriate skills on the part of job seekers and differential pay and benefits on the part of employers.

**WIA Area 3’s Employers with 1000+ Employees (First Quarter 2002)**

- |                                      |                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Carilion Health Systems, Inc.     | 9. Kroger Company                    | 16. City of Salem                |
| 2. Roanoke County School Board       | 10. ITT Industries                   | 17. County of Roanoke            |
| 3. Roanoke City School Board         | 11. Veterans Administration Hospital | 18. United States Postal Service |
| 4. City of Roanoke                   | 12. Lewis Gale Medical Center        | 19. Yokohama Tire Corporation    |
| 5. First Union of Virginia           | 13. Franklin County School Board     | 20. General Electric Company     |
| 6. Advance Stores, Inc.              | 14. MW Manufacturers, Inc.           | 21. The Berkshire Corporation    |
| 7. Walmart Associates, Inc.          | 15. Allstate Insurance Company, Inc. |                                  |
| 8. Meadwestvaco Chemical Corporation |                                      |                                  |
- Ranked by # of employees

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

**WIA Area 3 Employers by number of Employees 3rd Quarter, 2001**

# Of Employees	# Of Employers
0-4	4,262
5-9	1,762
10-19	1,164
20-49	870
50-99	292
100-249	183
250-499	47
500-999	17
1000+	21

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Job Seekers

The job seeker customer base consists primarily of those who are unemployed and currently seeking employment, and incumbent workers who are employed yet making insufficient earnings. Many workers who have lost jobs due to recent plant closings do not have skills that can be easily transferred to a new position. Many lack basic literacy skills. Unemployed job seekers are looking for immediate employment with high wages within a reasonable commuting distance. Incumbent workers seek better, higher level positions with commensurate pay increases.

**Our Services**

**For Businesses:**

The Workforce Centers offer businesses a wide range of value-added consultation and services including:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • Applicant Screening       | • Small Business Assistance                 |
| • Applicant Referrals       | • Entrepreneurial Training                  |
| • On-the-Job Training       | • Job Postings                              |
| • Work Keys Assessment      | • Computerized Skills-Based Matching        |
| • Skill Proficiency Testing | • Tax Credits for Hiring Eligible Employees |
| • Pre-employment Assessment | • Prevailing Wage Information               |
| • Pre-employment Training   | • Economic Trends                           |
| • Labor Market Information  | • Other Business Resources                  |
| • Area Wage Surveys         |   |

Partners work with employers to find qualified employees who can perform well on the job.

***For Job Seekers***

The Workforce Centers offer individuals a full assortment of career planning services including:

- Job Listings
- Vocational Training
- Job Referral
- Job Seeking Workshops
- Resume Writing
- Job Appointments
- Unemployment Insurance
- Copier and Fax Services
- Job Search Assistance
- Job Retention Workshops
- On-the-job Training
- Work Experience
- GED Classes and Testing
- Educational Opportunities
- Youth Vocational Training
- Supportive Services
- Local Educational Facilities and Program Referral

Partners work with job seekers to find and retain good jobs and training needed to be successful.

***For Youth***

Workforce Development programs offer youth ages 14-21 the following services:

- Work Experience
- Occupational Training
- Summer Youth Programs
- Job Placement

Partners work with youth to provide education and experiences that will lead to successful employment as adults.

Suppliers are required to report regularly on the status of WIA participants, and to follow up with job retention information upon completion of the program. Suppliers are also encouraged to participate in the process of streamlining the information gathering process, and to work with the WDB to better serve the area's workforce needs by participating in meetings and on committees.

Suppliers are involved in the strategic planning process and workforce development systems implemented by the WDB. As members of the Workforce Development Board, the Youth Council and/or WDB Committees, suppliers act in an advisory capacity regarding WIA policies and issues.

The WDB is committed to establishing a system to report consumer information relative to WDB-approved training programs. To the extent possible, the WDB will collaborate with training providers to base consumer information reporting on existing occupational and performance standards.

***State of the WIA Area III Workforce***

Based on the educational data from the 2000 Census approximately 27% of those persons 25 years or older in the region had acquired an associate, bachelors, or post-graduate degree. Approximately 52% of the residents 25 years and older had a high school diploma or some college. Approximately 21% of the residents 25 years of age and older in the region did not possess a high school diploma or GED.

Generally the Area III workforce has been adequate to meet the needs of new employers offering jobs of \$10.00/hour+. Companies paying below this amount have trouble finding and retaining employees. According to area manufacturers, potential employees possess trainable levels of skill and education. Pocketed areas of the region have high school graduation rates which lag behind the state average.

The Area III Public School Educational Data (attached) illustrates the local trends of public education over the past four school years, as reported by the Virginia Department of Education.

### ***Lifelong Learning, Skill Enhancement and Knowledge***

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board office is located at the Roanoke Higher Education Center. The Roanoke Higher Education Center presents an innovative system that supports, encourages and promotes life-long learning. This unique learning resource houses eighteen organizations (Averett University, Bluefield College, Blue Ridge Technical Academy, College of Health Sciences, Ferrum College, Fifth District Employment and Training Consortium, Hampton University, Hollins University, Conflict Resolution Center, Mary Baldwin College, Old Dominion University, Radford University, Roanoke College, TAP-This Valley Works, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Virginia Western Community College and the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board) that offer the citizens of Area III an inclusive range of programs from GED preparation to masters programs. Area III's Workforce Centers in Roanoke, Covington and Rocky Mount offer workforce development resources to a growing number of citizens. Additionally, local school divisions offer adult education programs, Virginia Western Community College and Dabney Lancaster Community College offer workforce development programs, the Greenfield Center in Botetourt County offers workforce skills training, and Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with area businesses and the Roanoke Valley Society of Human Resource Management, offers business dinners programs.

### ***Growth Sector Training Demands***

As industries such as healthcare, retailing, wholesale trade, personal services, transportation and communications continue to grow in the region, so too does the need for training opportunities to meet employer needs. The WDB strives to coordinate with regional educators to ensure that those needs will be met.

### ***Access to Training***

WDB strives to partner with all agencies and educational facilities in the region to develop workforce strategies and to include them as part of our workforce training network. All training providers that have been WIA-certified locally are entered into the Virginia Training Provider Network (VTPN) and accessed at the Workforce Centers.

The Workforce Development Board encourages involvement from area training providers by inviting them to participate in meetings, share their perspective on workforce training strategies, and serve on Board committees. The Workforce Development Board is a member of the Roanoke Higher Education Center which houses fourteen colleges and universities, in addition to core and intensive service providers like TAP-This Valley Works, and the Fifth District Employment and Training Consortium. Our involvement with RHEC allows us direct and readily available access to a number of educational resources.

The WDB is actively in pursuit of funding for the Workforce Information Delivery Network, an internet based workforce database that will focus on training providers, and workforce needs specific to our area. The development of this database will help us to identify existing education and training providers and network them together to achieve our workforce goals.

### ***Workforce Development and Youth***

Youth in the area have opportunities for learning and job training through basic education, GED services, job shadowing, occupational skills, job search classes, work experience, job placement, core services, and support services—such as transportation and counseling.

### ***Workforce Development Services for Adults***

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, through Workforce Centers and partners, provides adult basic education, GED classes and training, on-the-job training, classroom training, work experience, job counseling, core, intensive and support services (such as transportation, childcare, and counseling).

### ***Supportive Services***

There are limited funds available for supportive services in the region, however this is one of the greatest needs. RADAR (van service) provides local transportation for people with disabilities for a nominal charge. Public transportation is available in the City of Roanoke but not in surrounding rural areas. Childcare is available, but costly. Step, Inc. provides affordable childcare in the region and United Way facilitates programs that provide childcare to those in

need. Mount Regis Center and the Lewis Gale Center for Behavioral Health in Salem, Carilion Behavioral Health in Roanoke, and a number of smaller private facilities provide drug and alcohol treatment. Incumbent workers have the greatest challenge in finding these services because their income level is too high to qualify them for assistance programs and too limited to allow them to pay for these services themselves.

### ***Our Partners and Our Plan***

The Workforce Development Board is made up of representatives of community based-organizations such as TAP-This Valley Works and League of Older Americans – Area Agency on Aging, organized labor organizations such as the Local 100 Sheet Metal Workers International Association, private industry such as Altec Industries, Inc., public agencies such as the Virginia Employment Commission and the Department of Rehabilitative Services, as well as educational institutions including the public school system, community colleges, and private colleges such as the National College of Business and Technology and Roanoke College. Partner members, business members, and Workforce Center partners actively participate in the strategy and implementation of local workforce initiatives through their involvement with the WDB and its committees. Board members, stakeholders, partners and other interested parties attended a public forum on December 6, 2002 to contribute to strategic plan revisions for 2003. Workforce Development Board meetings are publicized and open to the public. Agencies and/or individuals have the opportunity to provide input into the plan during the revision process and during the annual thirty-day public review in February. The Public review is publicized in local newspapers, and the plan can be accessed from the WDB website (<http://www.westernvaworkforce.com>) and in appropriate public offices in Area III.

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### **Section 3 - BRIDGING AREA III WORKFORCE GAPS**

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Essentially, most of the services needed by our key customers already exist within the region. The major barriers are systemic and fiscal. A cooperative effort must be made to synchronize these services into one easily accessible system, and promote the existence of the system so that potential customers will benefit from it. The Workforce Development Information Delivery Network, a project now in the planning stages, will gather all workforce related information relevant to the region and make it accessible to all of the region's workers, job seekers and employers. To meet our goals we must aggressively pursue alternative funding so that services can be provided to all, and the vision of a knowledge workforce that will stimulate economic development and promote a culture of lifelong learning can become a reality in Area III.

Changing economy, loss of jobs as some industries downsize, severe state budget cuts, work ethic and literacy are major issues that the WDB continues to address. Workforce issues involve enhancing educational programs in K-12, and in post-secondary institutions. The transition between high school and college or the workforce is disjointed. Students must have a better understanding of the world of business and trade when they graduate from high school. In order to promote a better understanding of the world of business and trade to high school graduates, business people need to be made aware of the need to get involved in classroom activities.

It is important to graduate computer/technology literate students from schools. Area III must also focus on retraining dislocated workers from declining low tech industries such as furniture and textiles. Individuals must be adequately trained to fill both entry level positions in the service industry and manufacturing positions created by the new economy which require higher level technical skills. The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board is committed to identifying and addressing these and other workforce issues.

#### **Gaps: Information**

The VEC provides extensive labor market data that is useful to WIA programs. However, much of this data is broken down by regions that are not consistent with the division of WIA areas. This data needs to be available by WIA region and county by county in order to provide an accurate assessment of the labor market that we serve.

The reporting system used to provide data for the current management information system is too complicated and burdensome. Providers do not have the time or the incentive to provide all of the information requested. As a result, many providers are reluctant to apply for certification and customer choice is compromised.

The process of closing the information gap will involve streamlining the efforts of all of the organizations which gather employment, education and workforce data into one cooperative project coordinated by the WDB. Those organizations should include Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, Dabney Lancaster Community College, Virginia Western Community College, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Employment Commission, the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and members of the business community. The WDB is pursuing funds to develop the Workforce Development Information Delivery Network (WDIDN), a central online database of regional workforce and training information that can be accessed and utilized by all.

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**Gaps: Workforce Delivery System Structure**

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**System Gap 1: Structural Organization**

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The relationship between the partners, the Workforce Centers and the WDB is not clearly outlined in a manner that is understood by all participants.

**Bridge:**

- Develop an outline and chart that clearly delineates the role of each Workforce Center partner in the system.

**System Gap 2: Reporting System**

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The reporting system needs to be refined so that WDB goals and performance data can be accurately measured.

**Bridge:**

- Create a “no wrong door” database system so that individuals, once entered into the system can be tracked through all of their activities with WDB partners. Develop incentives for those who benefit from core services which do not require registration to register and respond to surveys.

**System Gap 3: Marketing and Awareness:**

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Many businesses and individuals are not aware of the opportunities available to them through the Workforce Centers.

**Bridge:**

- Launch a marketing campaign that will promote awareness of the Workforce Development Board, its mission, services, and the Workforce Center system. This will involve continuous contact with the media.
- Promote positive aspects of WDB youth programs.
- Provide presentations to groups like the Rotary, SHRM, Chambers of Commerce, and faith-based organizations that inform individuals and businesses of the WDB’s vision and the programs available through the WDB.
- Distribute the WDB brochure to businesses and business organizations, at malls, schools, institutions of higher learning, and other locations where people gather.
- Encourage board members and partners to inform people they socialize with, and other organizations or clubs they participate in about the work the WDB does and the opportunities provided by the board.

**System Gap 4: Partner Participation with One-Stop Operator**

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Not all of the Workforce Center partners are members of the one stop operator consortium. Their participation would improve communication and seamless operation of the Workforce Centers.

**Bridge:**

- Inform Workforce Center partners of the benefit to participation in the activities of the one stop operator consortium, and encourage them to become partner team members.

### **System Gap 5: Customer Awareness**

Many customers may not be aware of the opportunities available to them at the Workforce Centers. Customers receive packets that contain information about all of the Workforce Center partners but this information may be overwhelming, and many customers are unable to read.

#### **Bridge:**

- Develop a single handout that will define all of the available services and the appropriate contacts.
- Develop a video loop that outlines all of the Workforce Center services that will play in the waiting room of the Workforce Center.
- Encourage Workforce Center employees to alert customers to programs which will benefit them.
- Employ an information person who interviews customers in a manner that is brief and friendly but will provide enough information to direct customers to the partners that will most benefit them.

### **System Gap 6: Workforce Training Information**

Much of the workforce training information in the Virginia Training Provider Network (VTPN) database is incomplete for our area so customers may not be made aware of all of the applicable training programs that exist. This information gap compromises customer choice.

#### **Bridge:**

- Develop a concise, clear format for training provider applications, in the order that is requested from the VTPN so this information can be entered into the system efficiently, and the application process is not as burdensome for training providers.

### **System Gap 7: Partners Needed**

There are many organizations in the region that provide services which would enhance our workforce development efforts. These organizations need to be identified and encouraged to participate in the system, particularly those which provide necessary supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and healthcare.

#### **Bridge:**

- Identify and recruit partners that would enhance the workforce delivery system.
- Develop relationships with the following organizations that have already been identified (in addition to our existing partners):
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ United Way</li> <li>▪ Virginia Cooperative Extension</li> <li>▪ Family Services of the Roanoke Valley</li> <li>▪ Fathers at Work Action Committee</li> <li>▪ Partners for Kids</li> <li>▪ Veterans Outreach Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better Beginnings of the Roanoke Valley</li> <li>▪ Junior Achievement</li> <li>▪ Blue Ridge Independent Center</li> <li>▪ Roanoke Mayor's Council on the Disabled</li> </ul>
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### **Gaps: Youth**

#### **Youth Gap 1: Truancy**

Potential truants are not engaged in school. The system for addressing truancy is not working effectively. Youth learn the system and become masters of how to avoid being identified as dropouts or qualified as "alternative students". Truancy regulations are not followed consistently. Parents often leave for work before the child goes to school, and are unaware their children are not at school. Parents often lack life skills to work with the behavior problems of their children. School systems, courts, parents groups, social services, cooperative education, business, and community action groups all must work together to address truancy problems. Truancy very frequently leads to dropping out of school.

**Bridge:**

- *K-4:* Provide life skills training for parents and custodians to prevent students from becoming truants in later years.
- *Middle School:* (75% of dropouts are 9<sup>th</sup> grade students) Reward WDB program students who have good attendance. Example: For every ten consecutive school days a student goes to school, that student will receive a free movie ticket or rental.
- *High School:* The WDB and the Youth Council will assist Area III school divisions in developing SOL directed, workforce focused curricula. The WDB and the Youth Council will facilitate business partnerships with Area III school divisions to provide internships and incentives for students to remain in school. This would include involving employers in the classroom to emphasize to students that a high school diploma or GED is a requirement for successful employment.
- Work with school systems and Junior Achievement to incorporate *Economics to Stay in School* class into the curricula at all at risk schools.

**Youth Gap 2: Homebound Instruction**

Youth receive homebound instruction for behavioral and medical reasons. These students frequently do not receive the pre-employment, work maturity or social skills training that other youth receive in the public school environment. These students usually receive a maximum of two hours daily/10 hours per week of instruction. Often, homebound instruction does not provide appropriate academic skills.

**Bridge:**

- Work with social services and the school systems to find creative solutions for homebound students.
- Work with employers to find part time jobs for homebound students that will provide on the job training.

**Youth Gap 3: Employment for Disabled Youth**

Youths who are developmentally disabled or severely physically disabled have very few options for employment or on-the-job training. Parents often do not understand the system. Services provided at no charge end at age 22. There is no easily identifiable program that will link these individuals to continuing education programs. Furthermore, many employers have not developed or used programs like on-the-job training that would benefit youths who have few skills and abilities on which to build. Schools, parents, employers and community action groups, like Goodwill, DRS, Project Train-IT and businesses must unite to find positive solutions for youths with disabilities.

**Bridge:**

- Identify the number of disabled youth. Determine how many of these youths can be served by our partners and how many additional disabled youth need to be served.

**Youth Gap 4: Alternative Program Youth Vocational Training**

Youth enrolled in alternative programs in some school divisions are not likely to receive vocational skills training because they may not be permitted on school campuses due to past behavioral problems. This limits training availability to youth even when a program may be able to assist with the cost. Schools, community colleges, and community action agencies must partner to provide vocational skills training to students in alternative programs.

**Bridge:**

- Identify students who are not receiving training.
- Evaluate skills/needs.
- Make referrals to Job Corps when appropriate.
- Provide adaptive individualized vocational training such as entrepreneurship programs.
- Find partners to work on solving behavioral problems.

**Youth Gap 5: Occupational Skills Training:** (masonry, auto mechanics, electrical, construction)

While there are instruments in place to assess the occupational needs of area employers, more input from local businesses is needed to strengthen occupational education. Partners needed are WDB, Job Corps, VEC, community colleges, schools, training providers, youth programs chambers of commerce and the business community.

**Bridge:**

- Coordinate with the business community and organizations such as the VEC, Roanoke Valley Regional Alliance, Roanoke College, and Virginia Western Community College who gather workforce related data to assess workforce needs.
- Coordinate with providers of vocational education to ensure that necessary training opportunities are provided in WIA Area III.

**Youth Gap 6: Youth Perceived as Dropouts:** (under the age of 18)

Many youth perceived to be dropouts (under 18) are not identified as dropouts and are therefore not referred to alternative programs. Community action agencies, adult education, and schools must work together to ensure that these students no longer fall through the cracks of a system designed to serve their specific needs.

**Bridge:**

- Identify and consistently refer drop-outs and perceived dropouts to out-of-school programs provided by the WDB.
- Give students incentive to enroll in alternative programs.
- Engage students in school. (see Gap 1: Truancy).

**Gaps: Adults****Adult Gap 1: Basic Education Skills:**

Some workers lack the basic education skills needed to fill available job openings (reading, oral and written communications, and math).

**Bridge:**

- Identify job seekers who need basic education and refer them to providers of adult basic education. This will be done during initial customer needs assessment at the Workforce Centers, and through self-assessment that can be accessed through the proposed database system, Workforce Development Information Delivery Network, (WDIDN).
- Encourage businesses to provide incentives to employees for improving their education and skills.

**Adult Gap 2: Workforce Shortages in Certain Fields:**

There is a shortage of trained workers in some fields, especially in education and healthcare. Many teachers and healthcare workers are needed. It is especially important to address the future needs of these fields before a crisis results.

**Bridge:**

- Identify shortage sectors through research performed by the WDIDN Project

**Adult Gap 3: Funding:**

Additional funding sources are needed to provide training and supportive services.

**Bridge:**

- Establish partnerships between employers and training providers to provide additional funding for training.
- Work effectively with partners to actively pursue grant money so that all WDB customers will be served adequately.

**Adult Gap 4: Flexibility in Training Programs:**

Adult needs, commitments and responsibilities mandate flexibility in order for them to attend training. Training programs need to be flexible and innovative in providing training (open entry/exit) to address specific needs of adults. There is a need to find ways to transfer the experience of employees displaced from declining industries.

**Bridge:**

- Provide flexible training programs with open entry/exit.
- Provide distance learning opportunities that are self-paced so that adults with responsibilities and commitments can work toward training goals at a convenient pace and schedule.
- Identify skills that can be transferred from declining industries to growth industries and provide transitional training to individuals in this category.

**Adult Gap 5: Identification of Training Opportunities:**

All training opportunities (two and four year colleges, vocational schools, technical schools, etc.) must be identified to ensure needs of employers are met, such as the increased need for technical skills.

**Bridge:**

- The Workforce Development Information Delivery Network will identify all workforce-related training and degree programs available in the region, and the region's workforce needs, and compile them in one central database accessible to all. (See attached project summary).

**Adult Gap 6: Strengthening Work Ethic:**

Employers expect workers to arrive on time and be ready to work. They expect a level of quality to the work. These important qualities are lacking from some workers' abilities or attitudes. Poor work ethic is a unique challenge for providers.

**Bridge:**

- Identify customers who will benefit from job readiness training.
- Continue to incorporate job readiness training into intensive services.

**Adult Gap 7: Recognition of Employers who provide educational services:**

It is important to recognize the companies in the area that provide education and utilize WDB to assist in this process.

**Bridge:**

- Identify and give recognition to employers that provide educational services to their employees.

**Adult Gap 8: Employee Incentive for Skill Upgrading:**

Employers need to offer their employees more incentives to upgrade their skills.

**Bridge:**

- Coordinate with area businesses and business organizations to create incentives for employees to upgrade their skills.

**Adult Gap 9: Individual Obstacles:**

Many workers do not pursue continuing education or training, even when money is available. Multiple obstacles such as work ethic, family responsibilities, fear of failure in training, child and elder care needs, and lack of transportation need to be identified and addressed to enable workers to retrain for better jobs. Incumbent workers are often unable to devote time to training because they must work more than one job in order to survive or provide for family members who are unable to work.

**Bridge:**

- Identify obstacles to training.
- Provide supportive services to address individual needs.

**Adult Gap 10: Customer Choice:**

Customers are often not aware of the choices they have to train for better jobs.

**Bridge:**

- Provide skill assessment and job counseling.
- Provide assistance with training provider database.
- WDIDN will provide comprehensive information on workforce related training opportunities that will be user friendly and easily accessible (see WDIDN Project Summary).

**Adult Gap 11: Support Services:**

There is not enough funding for support services such as day care, transportation, and drug and alcohol treatment. These systems are in place and could be offered to our customers if additional funding was available. Community action agencies, community service agencies, and private providers cooperate to provide support services, and to pursue funding for those services.

**Bridge:**

- Coordinate and partner with all agencies in the region that provide supportive services to maximize potential and pursue funding.

**Gaps: Performance Measures**

A universal reporting system for the region (WIA and Non WIA funded programs) will provide information on job placements and attainment of skills. The WDB will work with employers to encourage flexibility and incentives for their employees to use training programs. Businesses that employ individuals trained through WDB programs will be surveyed to determine the level of improvement employee training provides. The surveys will measure job promotions, salary increases and increases in level of productivity. WDB goals and objectives will be clearly defined to promote uniformity in tracking placement outcomes and partner activities.

WDB will develop joint programming to improve work ethic and basic educational skills (math, reading and writing). Marketing Workforce Centers and programs internally and externally, promoting the local website, and the WDIDN will help close the gap. Workforce Center managers will develop partner agreements that encourage provision of joint programming to improve employability skills. Cooperation and coordination between employers and training providers to identify training areas and meet community workforce needs will be enhanced. On-the-job-training, internships, apprenticeships, work experience, job shadowing, annual or more frequent community labor market analysis will be provided utilizing the following resources: local Workforce Network group, WDB, regional and local chambers of commerce, Virginia Employment Commission Employee Advisory Committee, Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission and Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership.

Efforts between the WDB and operator providers to refine reporting procedures are a continuous process as the Workforce Center system evolves.