



**WESTERN VIRGINIA
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**
*Serving the Cities of Covington, Roanoke and Salem and the
Counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke*

**Workforce Investment Act
Area III
STRATEGIC PLAN**

July 1, 2004-June 30, 2007

To make comments on the plan, please write to:

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WESTERN VIRGINIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
AREA III STRATEGIC PLAN 2004-2007

Background and Overview

Virginia 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 311,827.

<i>Locality</i>	<i>Square Miles</i>	<i>Population</i>
City of Covington	6	6,303
City of Roanoke	43	94,911
City of Salem	15	24,747
Alleghany County & Clifton Forge	448	17,215
Botetourt County	543	30,496
Craig County	331	5,091
Franklin County	712	47,286
Roanoke County	251	85,778

Source: US Census 2000

WIA Area III 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 the Area III Strategic Plan

Area III began the strategic planning process for 2004-2007 by accepting the opportunity of conducting a Demand Plan Pilot Project. In October, 2003, the Build a Better Workforce Demand Survey received input from almost 700 businesses regarding current and future skill needs for their employees. After receiving the Local Strategic Planning Guidance from the Virginia Workforce Council and meetings with Dr. Bolin, other Virginia Area Executive Directors, and the state consultants, The Area III Strategic Planning Committee set a time table to achieve the protocol for Planning established in the Local Strategic Planning Guidance. The WDB reviewed the Strategic Plan Timetable on April 29, 2004.

The Strategic Planning Committee met on May 10th, 2004, reviewed the current Strategic Plan, further refined the Committee's background informational requirements, and set a plan for the Area III Workforce Strategic Planning Meeting to be held on Friday, May 21st, 2004. The Area III Workforce Strategic Planning Meeting was held from 8:30am to 12noon, Friday, May 21st, 2004 at the Roanoke Wyndham Airport Hotel. There were 48 attendees, 19 from the private sector. All attendees completed the six question survey and participated in the SWOT analysis. The six question survey was sent to 179 human resource directors in Area III and 17 responded. The Strategic Planning Committee met on May 28th, 2004 to review the results of the Workforce Strategic Planning Meeting and the e-mail survey, which was compiled in the WDB Strategic Plan Data Book 2004.

The strategic role of the WIA Area III Workforce Development Board had two parts:

- 1) Develop the long-range vision for workforce development in the area, focusing all organizations involved in workforce development together to coordinate activities.

- 2) Meet WIA Performance Objectives as the WDB delivers customers services through the Dislocated Worker, Adult, and Youth Programs.

The development of the long-range vision involves coordination of activities and resources among multiple areas and many service delivery organizations to ensure the vision will be implemented. It requires bringing the stakeholders together with a common mission and a commitment to working together. The Area III WDB strategic direction was developed as a cooperative project by Area III stakeholders, including economic development organizations, to ensure that the current and future workforce needs of the area are met.

Environmental Scan: Demographic, Economic & Educations Trends

#1. Demographic Trends

- Area III has a population of 312,000, of which 160,000 make up the workforce, which is projected to grow 4% between 2000 and 2010.
- According to the U.S. Census 2000, Area III greatest age population is clustered in the age brackets of 25 to 54, with a median age of 40.2.
- According the Virginia Employment Commission's Community Profile, Area III's race breakdown is 85.4% white, 11.9% African American, 1.8% American Indian, Alaska Native and other/multi-race, 1.1% Hispanic, and 1% Asian.
- According to the U.S. Census 2000, Males make up 48% and Females make up 52% of the population.
- According to the Virginia Employment Commission's Community Profile, Area III's median family income is \$47,145 and 9.7% of the population is below the poverty line.
- According to the Virginia Employment Commission's Community Profile, Area III's educational attainment reflects 20.9% are less than High School Graduates, 31.3% are High School Graduates or equivalency, 20.9% have some College but no degree, 6.7% have an Associate's Degree, and 13.4 have a Bachelor's Degree.
- According to the Virginia Employment Commission's Community Profile, Area III's commuting patterns reflect 68.9% are people who live and work in the country, 8.5% are out-commuters, and 22.6% are in-commuters.

#2. Economic and Business Factors

Area III has a diverse grouping of businesses-from healthcare to construction, manufacturing to call centers and retail to governmental agencies. 3% of the Area III businesses employ 100 or more employees but those employers employ 49% of the workforce. Recently, the addition of Integrity Windows and Cardinal Glass (manufacturing), the expansion of Metalsa Roanoke (manufacturing) and MW Manufacturers, the announcements of several additional new businesses have added growth and offset several business closings. The Six Question Employer Survey responses indicated that 2705 entry level and 1395 experienced workers expect to hire in 2005.

Area III growing occupations reflect the diverse business mix: Registered Nurse, LPN, CNA, Welders, Customer Service Representatives, Machine Operators, General Mangers, Teachers, Computer Engineers and support specialists, Child Care Workers, Truck Drivers, First Line Supervisors, Automotive Service Technicians, while declining occupations

reflect business downturn: Sewing Machine Operators, Order Clerks, Word Processing and typists, Switchboard Operators, Computer Operators, Textile knitting, weaving, winding/twisting machine operators, and furniture machine operators. Quarterly hiring patterns and turnover trends reflect the local business environment.

#3. Regional Education Factors

Area III Education programs are focused on meeting business demand occupation needs. The School Divisions are reducing the students with no plans after high school. In 02-03, this group numbered 271 in Area III, an opportunity for recruitment in to the older youth program, if qualified. Most graduating students intend to attend a four year college, which means there is a good chance they will not immediately return to Area III to work. The second largest numbers of graduating students intend to attend a two year college, probably community college. These students generally stay in Area III after graduation to work. When comparing programs available in Area III educational systems to the demand occupations noted above, programs generally connect with skill demands for demand occupations. Additionally, local school divisions offer adult education programs and technical training centers, Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College offer workforce development programs (VWCC is developing and delivering a nursing program in response to a major local healthcare facility and DSLCC coordinates workforce training with Mead Westvaco), and the Greenfield Center in Botetourt County offers workforce skills training.

According to the Six Question Employer Survey results, local companies need entry level workers with basic skills and incumbent workers with skill upgrades in basic, advanced skills, with an emphasis on intermediate skills. The skill deficiencies of entry level applicants for employment are writing, problem solving and communications followed by computer skills and math. Experienced workers applying for work are deficient in writing, problem solving and communications followed by computer skills.

Additional skills needed are auto, customer service, experienced equipment operators, flexibility/cross trainable, forklift, healthcare, human service, job readiness, mechanical, people skills, research, soft skills, spelling, teamwork, technical detail, time management, managers, welding, work ethic.

Employers training new and incumbent workers will use primarily In-house/On-the-Job Training, Community College, and Private School/Trainers.

According to the Build a Better Future Survey, employer skill requirements focus on work ethics, computer/internet skills, interpersonal skills, job readiness skills, and customer service/communications skills.

#4. Other Factors

The Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership and the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation targets companies in the following sectors: automotive/transportation, biotech/biomedical, value-added, high-end manufacturing, optoelectronics, and packaging. The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, which covers virtually all of Area III is focusing on industry cluster information.

Area III's Workforce Centers in Roanoke, Covington and Rocky Mount is adding partner organizations. The Roanoke Workforce Center will modify the building interior to create a more functional workforce center and the Rocky Mount Workforce Center will move to a larger, more function facility.

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, Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Ferrum College, Hampton University, Hollins University, Conflict Resolution Center, Mary Baldwin College, Old Dominion University, Radford University, Roanoke College, TAP-This Valley Works, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Virginia Western Community College) that offer the citizens of Area III an inclusive range of programs from GED preparation to masters programs.

Environmental Scan Summary: Demographic, Economic & Educations Trends

In summary, there appear to be no dramatic populations changes forecast that would affect the current low unemployment rate (3.0%). The continued movement of young people (ages 20-24) to larger metropolitan areas is generally offset by middle age couples, generally with families or family ties, wanting to return and work in Area III because of the local amenities.

The almost 10% of the population below the poverty line and the 21% of the population with less than a High School Graduation presents an opportunity for WIA Youth and Adult Programs.

It is estimated that over 20,000 citizens in Area III currently employed are underemployed. These are incumbent workers who possess a skill set and experience that would offer greater employment opportunity if available. With the diverse grouping of businesses in Area III, and the uniqueness of specific technical skills each business type requires, the WDB's focus will be on the local skill requirements gathered from the Build a Better Future Survey and the Employer Skills Survey. Generally, the businesses responding need entry level workers with basic skills and incumbent workers with basic skill upgrades. The WDB will coordinate employer skills input with the local educational organizations offering renewed and focused facilities and programs on workforce development. An example: The WDB has been approached by local construction contractors with replacement concerns. Their skilled craftsman and journeymen are moving toward retirement and the replacements through apprenticeship, on the job training, and internships are not backfilling properly. The WDB is working with its program contractors and education systems to meet this specific demand (see strategic goals). The Area III Economic Development Organizations and the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission are champions of the importance of a demand driven workforce development system. The WDB's goal is to offer these organizations the type and quality of a value added skills workforce that attracts added value wages.

The WDB Strategic Direction

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board's Strategic Direction is designed to connect and align with the Virginia Workforce Council's Strategic Direction.

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VIRGINIA
WORKforce
NETWORK

The WDB Vision

Cultivate a
Dynamic Workforce
Development System
That stimulates
Economic Development in
Area III and Western Virginia



The Virginia Workforce Council's Vision:

Our Commonwealth has a world-class workforce system that is responsive to employer and worker needs and creates a well-trained, well-educated and globally competitive workforce. This workforce is qualified to meet the needs of employers, both now and in the future, and is engaged in life long learning.

The Virginia Workforce Council's Mission:

The Virginia Workforce Council is a business-led board that acts as principal advisor to the Governor and provides strategic leadership to the state regarding the workforce development system and its efforts to create a strong workforce aligned with employer needs.

The Virginia Workforce Council's Values:

Customer Driven, Fact-based, Collaborative, Continuously Improving, Career Focused, Proactive, Inclusive

The Virginia Workforce Council's Goals:

Integration and Alignment, Local Excellence, Awareness and Confidence, Metrics and Incentives, "Key Player" Effectiveness

WDB Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal #1

Taking action on Regional Cooperation Workforce Issues:

A theme consistent in the Area III SWOT analysis was Regional Cooperation on Workforce Issues. As a Weakness, taking action on regional cooperation workforce issues presented opportunities presented in the Opportunities area-better communications, strengthen transportation network, bilingual education, daycare/eldercare, teach work ethics, training of vocational skills, assessment of skills and effective government cooperation.

Essential factors in strategic goal success:

- Take the money off the table
- Focus attention on Area III Workforce Centers/Regular Open House
- Focus attention on New State MOU/Present New State MOU Workshop
- Present training to CLEOs, WDB, and Employers on available regional workforce resources

Virginia Workforce Council Goal: Integration and Alignment & Local Excellence

Workforce and Career Development System: Worker Pipeline & Worker Improvement

Strategic Goal #2

Taking action on Lack of Skills

Employer responses to surveys given in Area III (Build a Better Future and the Six Question Employer Survey) focused on the need for basic skills training for entry-level employees and the need for basic skills upgrade for incumbent workers. The basic skills highlighted were math, reading, writing, computer skills, and work ethics. The surveys also highlighted skill deficiencies and skills that need upgrading in 2005 for entry level and experienced workers of writing, problem solving, communications and computer skills.

Essential factors to strategic goal success:

- Link K-12 and Community College to employers/Present a best practices workshop
- Connect Junior Achievement with WDB/Coordinate use of Work Ethics curriculum
- Develop a data base of available basic skills training/Mail to Area III employers
- Develop best practices management classes for employers focused on building Work Ethic

Virginia Workforce Council Goal: Integration and Alignment/Awareness and Confidence

Workforce and Career Development System: Worker Improvement & Worker Pipeline

Strategic Goal #3

Taking action on Employee Advocacy

Transportation and accessible/affordable daycare were noted as two of the significant weaknesses in Area III. But both of those issues were noted as an excellent opportunity for workforce development in Area III. The goal of this strategy is to single out transportation and accessible/affordable daycare as issues that the WDB would champion for attention and action. But the WDB would also acknowledge that additional barriers are of concern and, if opportunities are presented, current or future programs could be directed to one or more of those barriers:

1. Substantial Language/ Cultural Barrier

2. Profiled U.I. Claimants
 3. Homeless
 4. Individuals with Poor Work History
 5. Offenders
 6. High School Drop-Outs/No GED
 7. Section 8/Public Housing Tenants
 8. Public Assistance and Food Stamp Recipients
 9. Single Parents (custodial and non-custodial)
 10. Individuals with a Suspended Drivers License,
Non-Traditional Employment License or No Viable Transportation
 11. Older Workers
 12. Disabled Adults
 13. Basic Skills Deficient Individuals
 14. Veterans
 15. Displaced Homemakers
 16. Migrant/Seasonal Farmer Workers
 17. Empowerment Zone Residents
- Youth Barriers:
1. Truancy
 2. Alternative Program Youth Vocational Training
 3. Occupational Skills Training
 4. Homebound Instruction
 5. Employment for Disabled Youth
 6. Youth Perceived as Dropouts

Essential Factors to Strategic goal success:

- Coordinate study of commuter travel with Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
- Coordinate a study of bus routes, RADAR transportation (Dial-a-ride Program), and Ride Share with Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission³
- Coordinate with United Way regarding Child Care/Present Area III Child Care Workshop
- Research workforce areas nationally for best youth practices to address issues highlighted by the WDB Youth Council

Virginia Workforce Council Goal: Integration and Alignment/"Key Player" Effectiveness
Workforce and Career Development System: Workers with Challenges/Worker Pipeline

Strategic Goal #4

Taking action on lack of knowledge of training and vocational opportunities
An Area III Weakness was devaluation of technical/trades/blue collar jobs and lack of knowledge of training opportunities/vocational opportunities. Again the participants at the SWOT analysis recognized an opportunity to promote and highlight facilities and programs that facilitate training and vocational skills, particularly for those with special needs.

Essential Factors to Strategic goal success:

- Utilize local multi-vocational contractors to promote career opportunities/Area school board presentations-class room presentations-
- Highlight career opportunities during traditional workforce celebration days/Ask Area III municipalities to issue proclamations for Workforce Center Open Houses.

- Schedule regular workforce day information days/Utilize the media/direct contact with dignitaries to promote Workforce Centers.
- Connect with Area III School Division Superintendents to include employers in both the academic and technical classroom/connect principles learned in school to the workplace
- Encourage Workforce Center partners to alert customer to programs/vocational opportunities that will benefit them

Virginia Workforce Council Goal: Local Excellence/Awareness and Confidence
Workforce Career and Development System: Worker Pipeline

Strategic Goal #5

Taking action to meet performance standards

The participants of the SWOT analysis pointed to skills assessment as a weakness (lack of skill assessment tools), a threat (lack of quantifiable skills assessment), and an opportunity (assessment of skills). Since meeting the 17 performance standards is a fundamental WIA requirement, and skill assessment tools are being utilized by WIA Program Contractors to assess clients, the WDB sees the need to integrate current program skills assessment with local workforce skills assessment in the attainment of the performance standards.

Essential Factors to Strategic Goal success:

- Coordinate review of assessment tools currently being utilized by Program Contractors with WorkKeys Specialists at Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College.
- Research workforce areas nationally for local quantifiable work skills assessment tools

Virginia Workforce Council Goals: Metrics and Incentives/Integration and Alignment
Workforce Career and Development System: Worker Pipeline/Worker Improvement/Worker with Challenges

Strategies for creating community awareness and securing community support of the Area III Strategic Plan:

The Area III Strategic Plan has already listed a number of incentives focused on community involvement, interaction, and support. In Area III, we deal with two distinctive community dynamics-urban and rural. But the WDB has an advantage, in that, organizations that contact both employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers are willing to partner and share workforce development information with their various constituents. The WDB will utilize the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce (their President is currently on the WDB), the Salem Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce, the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce, the Roanoke Regional Economic Development Partnership, the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation, the local ministerial associations, our Program Contractors, our CLEOs, and appropriate media contacts to focus attention on workforce development in Area III.

Strategies to leverage workforce and career development program resources to carry Area III's strategic direction.

As noted in Strategic Goal #1, the challenge is not finding all the workforce and career development program resources; it is the coordination of those resources. By making this issue our number one strategic goal, the WDB has noted the enormity and significance of the task. Our goal is to impress on each workforce resource the value in connecting their specific program in a workforce system that not only enhances all Area III workforce development but also offers their program the opportunity to development and grow. Once they see there is something in it for them, we have a chance-and we will take it.