

**Western Virginia  
Workforce Development Board**

**Action Plan**

**PY 2006**

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## I. The Strategic Direction

### Western Virginia Workforce Development Board Vision:

To cultivate a dynamic Workforce Development System that stimulates economic development in Virginia Local Workforce Investment 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, globally competitive workforce. This workforce, engaged in life-long learning, is qualified to meet the needs of employers, both now and in the future.

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWDB) has adopted the following values and goals as established by the Virginia Workforce Council. The Council values a system that is

- Customer-driven
- Collaborative
- Inclusive
- Fact-base
- Career-focused
- Collaborative
- Proactive

WVWDB concurs in the Council's goals:

- Integration and alignment
- Metrics and incentives
- Local excellence
- "Key player" effectiveness
- Awareness and confidence

## II. WVWDB Strategic Goals

### 1. Improve regional cooperation on workforce issues through enhanced communication.

A theme consistent in the Area III SWOT analysis was the lack of regional cooperation on workforce issues: communications, strengthen transportation network, bilingual education, daycare/eldercare, training of work ethics, training of vocational/technical skills, assessment of skills, and effective government cooperation.

#### Related Goals:

- Virginia Workforce Council Goal: Integration and Alignment/Local Excellence
- Workforce and Career Development System: Worker Pipeline & Worker Improvement

#### Key Actions:

- a) Schedule Area III Workforce Center marketing events.
- b) Coordinate use of state MOU.
- c) Conduct training for CLEO Consortium, Board of Directors and Youth Council members.
- d) Provide information/workshops for service providers.
- e) Provide information/workshops for employers.
- f) Review, update, distribute information about the WVWDB.
- g) Utilize print and broadcast media to inform the public about the services available.

#### Key Metrics:

- a) Conduct annual pre-tests and post-tests to gauge cooperation between regional workforce development partners and customers.

**Champion:** Marketing Committee

## **2. Provide opportunities for improving skills for entry-level and incumbent workers.**

Employer responses to Area III's "Build a Better Future" and the "Six-Question Employer" surveys focused on entry-level and incumbent employees. Entry-level employees need basic skills in math, reading, writing, computers, and work ethics. Incumbent employees need the same skills, as well as upgraded skills in writing, problem solving, communications, and computers (See Appendix F, page 26).

### **Related Goals:**

- Virginia Workforce Council Goal: Integration and Alignment/Awareness and Confidence
- Workforce and Career Development System: Worker Improvement & Worker Pipeline

### **Key Actions:**

- a) Request RFPs to provide training for entry-level and incumbent workers addressing basic skills in the areas of math, reading, writing, computers, work ethics, problem-solving, and communication.
- b) Demonstrate ways to Link K-12 and community colleges and other providers to employer through best practice workshop(s).
- c) Continue to update and expand our certified trainer provider list and disseminate the information to Area III employers.
- d) Develop best practice management information/workshop for employers focused on building work ethic.
- e) 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.
- f) Research workforce areas nationally for local quantifiable work skills assessment tools.

### **Key Metrics:**

- a) Implement Career Readiness Certificate and utilize results to establish benchmarks for future evaluation. The WDB will coordinate with Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College to focus appropriate WIA customers (job seekers and employers) into the Career Readiness Certificate Program.
- b) Measure number of skill training opportunities available considering both quantity and location. Utilizing Community Profile of Area III and Alleghany Roanoke Region Planning District data bases, measure and target demand occupations employers.

**Champion:** Workforce Oversight Committee

## **3. Improve access to employment for workers with challenges.**

Transportation and accessible/affordable daycare were noted as two of the significant weaknesses in Area III. The plan is to focus on transportation and accessible/affordable daycare as issues that the WDWDB would champion for attention and action. The WDWDB 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 barriers.

### **Related Goals:**

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

**Key Actions:**

- a) Research workforce areas nationally for best practices to address barriers to employment.
- b) Coordinate a study of commuter travel with the Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission to identify issues and propose solutions to overcome the transportation barrier.
- c) Coordinate a study of child care resources with the United Way and other providers to identify issues and propose solutions to overcome childcare barriers.
- d) Research best practices that integrate ways to assist youth and adults in overcoming barriers to employment.

**Key Metrics:**

- a) Continue current efforts to assess and identify barriers, availability of services, and gaps.
- b) Utilize the data to address breaking down the barriers and utilizing Area III workforce development resources to close demand gaps.

**Champion:** Workforce Oversight Committee

**4. Demonstrate the need for and the value of workers in the technical, vocational and trade areas.**

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

**Related Goals**

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

**Key Actions:**

- a) Utilize local multi-vocational contractors to promote career opportunities/area school board presentations-class room presentations.
- b) Highlight career opportunities during traditional workforce celebration days.
- c) Ask Area III municipalities to issue proclamations for Workforce Center Open Houses.
- d) Encourage Workforce Center partners to alert customers to vocational training opportunities that will benefit them
- e) Meet with Area III Division School Superintendents to encourage school counselors to promote vocational skills training.

The Key Action items above have been integrated into a marketing communications effort.

**Key Metrics:**

- a) Expand current awareness campaign to demonstrate to Area III students, parents, educators, and community leaders the need for technical, vocational, and trade skills.
- b) Measure secondary and higher education enrollments in technical, vocational, and trade programs.

**Champion:** Marketing Committee

## **5. Take action to meet performance standards.**

Understanding current performance and measuring progress are two essential steps to ensure effectiveness and improvement. 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 WDWDB recognizes the need to integrate current program skills assessment with local workforce skills assessment in the attainment of the performance standards.

### **Related Goals:**

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

### **Key Actions:**

- a) Meet 17 performance standards and include WDB compliance with Federal and State policy and procedures.
- b) Assure goals are clearly defined in requests for proposals (RFPs).
- c) Provide contractors appropriate training.

### **Key Metrics:**

- a) Meet at least 80 percent of Area III's performance standards.

**Champion:** Executive Committee