

## 2020-2024 Mission

We help drive equitable economic growth in Alexandria and Arlington County by implementing an effective, efficient, and inclusive workforce ecosystem that delivers equal access to innovative, integrated, data-driven products and services designed and aligned to meet the needs of businesses and all job seekers. We hold ourselves accountable to the system's goals and support high-impact outcomes.

## 2020-2024 Vision

The Alexandria/Arlington Workforce System envisions a region where every business has access to a qualified, job-ready workforce and every resident has the skills needed to connect with meaningful employment and advance in a career.

## Goal 1: Build Better Employer Relationships

Build better relationships **so that we can deliver value to customers** by filling in-demand jobs that are strategic to our diverse economy.

## Goal 2: Skill People Up!

**Develop** a proactive, confident, and qualified **workforce** with the essential workforce readiness competencies and credentials that meet current and anticipated business needs.

## Goal 3: Connect People to Jobs

**Connect people to job opportunities** that pay a living wage with benefits and that provide equitable opportunities for launching sustainable career pathways for work that is in demand.

## Goal 4: Ensure We Are Accessible to Everyone

Increase **equitable access to the local workforce system** and its services through collaborative partnerships and coordinated, innovative solutions.

## Goal 5: Better Promote What We Do

**Promote the workforce system** and its services through focused communication with employers, schools, and potential employees to meet the needs of all.

## Goal 1: Build Better Employer Relationships

Build better employer relationships **so that we can deliver value to customers** by filling their in-demand jobs that are strategic to our diverse economy.

### Strategies for Goal 1

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- 1.1 Develop new business partnerships with those who have not used or have underutilized the workforce system
- 1.2 Increase quality and frequency of communication and collaboration with other regional workforce systems to support employer recruitment goals
- 1.3 Build relationships with employers so that matches between their needs and job seekers can be facilitated
- 1.4 Use data to help develop employer engagement targets
- 1.5 Provide a rapid response to businesses that have layoffs, and assist affected employees
- 1.6 Provide assessment tools, for example, Career Scope, to align participant interests and skills with job opportunities
- 1.7 Ensure that students and other job seekers are considering the full range of job opportunities and careers, not just those that require higher education

## Goal 2: Skill People Up!

**Develop** a proactive, confident, and qualified **workforce** with the essential workforce readiness competencies and credentials that meet current and anticipated business needs.

### Strategies for Goal 2

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- 2.1 Improve internal collaboration among workforce system partners to ensure that development opportunities for job seekers are maximized
- 2.2 Ensure that job seekers are prepared for a more virtual, technologically driven workforce environment
- 2.3 Increase/develop a case coordination style of customer service, following up when training/education referrals are made and getting feedback from customers about the effectiveness of our efforts to help them develop

2.4 Provide education and training opportunities for job seekers

2.5 Provide work-based learning opportunities for job seekers

2.6 Provide cross-cultural orientation to new immigrants so that their job seeking expectations are appropriate and efforts to find work are successful

### **Goal 3: Connect People to Jobs**

**Connect people to job opportunities** that pay a living wage with benefits and that provide equitable opportunities for launching sustainable career pathways for work that is in demand.

#### **Strategies for Goal 3**

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3.1 Increase coordination and partnerships with other regional workforce systems to maximize job seekers' employment opportunities

3.2 Elevate work-based learning experiences to become a priority service of our region

3.3 Post relevant job opportunities produce and/or participate in virtual or in person hiring events

3.4 Provide connections for job seekers to work-based learning opportunities

3.5 Monitor and analyze labor market information so that the system is aware of current business needs

3.6 Keep school systems informed of labor market information

3.7 Provide ongoing training to staff ensuring their up-to-date awareness of all the resources for job seeker preparation

### **Goal 4: Ensure We Are Accessible to Everyone**

Ensure **equitable access to the local workforce system** and its services through collaborative partnerships and coordinated, innovative solutions.

#### **Strategies for Goal 4**

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4.1 Provide all communication about and from the workforce system in the languages most often spoken/read in our community

4.2 Improve case coordination and follow along, ensuring that there is support for job seekers who encounter barriers, particularly those who are one or more of the following: adult and youth ex-offenders; basic skills deficient individuals; homeless individuals; lack of educational and/or occupational skills attainment; living with a disability; long-term unemployed; low-income workers earning wages below self-sufficiency; older workers; poor work history and/or lack of work experience; pregnant and parenting youth; public assistance recipients (TANF, SNAP, SSI, Medicaid, etc.); runaway youth; or youth in, or previously in, foster care.

4.3 Communicate with community-based agencies (for example, social services) to ensure that their customers know about and can access workforce resources

4.4 Communicate with students and their counselors about workforce system services

4.5 Ensure that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to workforce system services

## **Goal 5: Better Promote What We Do**

**Promote the workforce system** and its services through focused communication with employers, schools, and potential employees to meet the needs of all.

### **Strategies for Goal 5**

5.1 Develop and implement targeted outreach activities about the workforce system for schools that would encourage students to use the workforce system for summer and post-graduation jobs

5.2 Develop and implement a broad public relations campaign for the community and our regional system about our activities and needs, including having articles written about our services or customers, publishing articles in business community newsletters or speaking at business community events

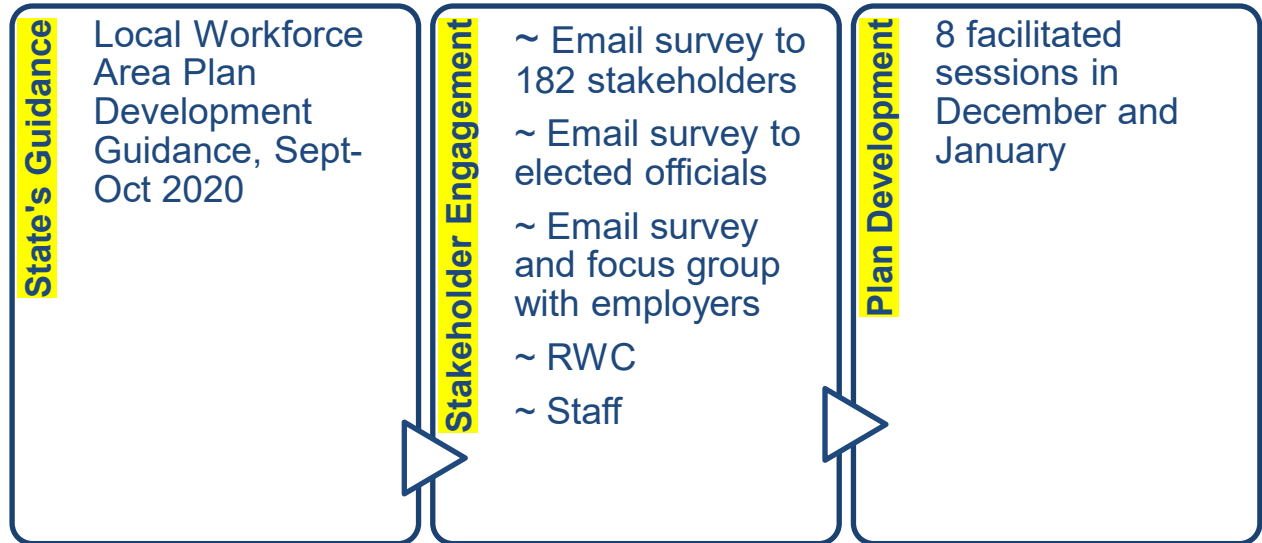
5.3 Develop and implement targeted outreach activities about the workforce system for employers, especially those who do not utilize or underutilize the workforce system, and promote work-based learning to all employers

5.4 Communicate to other regional systems about our activities and our needs

5.5 Actively educate local elected officials and others who can support the workforce system

## APPENDIX

### Overview of the process to develop the plan



### Highlights of the plan development sessions

**87 participants in virtual input sessions and  
24 additional people responded to a survey**

- ✓ Topic: Executive Committee Meeting - Strategic Planning  
Time: Dec 4, 2020 08:30 AM  
Participants: 6  
Focus: Environmental Scan and Vision, Mission, and Goals
- ✓ Topic: Regional Workforce Council & One-Stop Operations Committee -- Strategic Planning Committee  
Time: Dec 17, 2020 08:30 AM  
Participants: 40  
Focus: Environmental Scan and Vision, Mission, and Goals
- ✓ Topic: One Stop Operations Committee Meeting - Strategic Planning  
Time: Jan 4, 2021 08:30 AM  
Participants: 9  
Focus: Environmental Scan, Goals, and Strategies
- ✓ Topic: AJC Front Line Staff - Strategic Planning Meetings (3 one-hour meetings)  
Time: Jan 7, 2021 01:00 PM, 2:30 PM, 04:00 PM  
Participants: 17  
Focus: Environmental Scan and Strategies
- ✓ Topic: Employer Virtual Focus Group (facilitated by Dave Remick)  
Time: Jan 7, 2021  
Participants: 7  
Focus: Review Relevant Strategies
- ✓ Topic: Executive Committee Strategic Planning Meeting  
Time: Jan 13, 2021 08:30 AM  
Participants: 8  
Focus: Complete Plan

## **FOR REFERENCE: Strategic Plan Development Notes & Input**

### ***Environmental scan input from elected officials (5 respondents)***

**What do you think is the greatest challenge related to workforce issues in our community?**

- (3) Lack of community awareness of workforce assistance services available at the Alexandria Workforce Development Center and Arlington Employment Center
- (1) Lack of employer understanding of how the workforce system (Alexandria Workforce Development Center, Arlington Employment Center, Northern Virginia Community College, etc.) can assist them
- (1) Other (please specify)
  - The disappearance of jobs in hospitality, retail, transportation, due to COVID.
  - The ability of low-income workers to get to jobs with transit cuts that are coming.

**What is the most important change you would like to see in our workforce system?**

- (2) Increase training for and focus on lower skilled workers
- (2) Increased partnerships with the business community
- (1) Increased training for and focus on professionalism skills (soft skills) development

**What is the second most important change you would like to see in our workforce system?**

- (2) Increase training for and focus on lower skilled workers
- (2) Increased partnerships with the business community
- (1) Increased training for and focus on professionalism skills (soft skills) development

**In addition to anything mentioned in the previous questions, are there challenges to address or changes you want to see in our community workforce development efforts?**

- I must admit that I could use additional education in this area in light of COVID and the current job search/skill search environment.
- It is in my opinion critical to focus on improving the skillset of lower skilled workers, thus increasing their chances to find better paying and more sustainable jobs.
- The previous issues mentioned seem like pretty big ones to address.
- Thank you for asking. I don't feel as in touch as I used to be with workforce issues, so I'm not sure my feedback is all that helpful. But you are welcome to it! Perhaps a 30-minute briefing for electeds might be good. There are many new members.

### ***Environmental scan input from businesses (7 respondents)***

#### **What do you think is the greatest challenge related to workforce issues in our community?**

- (3) Lack of community awareness of workforce assistance services available at the Alexandria Workforce Development Center and Arlington Employment Center
- (1) Lack of employer understanding of how the workforce system (Alexandria Workforce Development Center, Arlington Employment Center, Northern Virginia Community College, etc.) can assist them
- (3) Other
  - Lack of opportunities for immigrants who held skilled jobs in their home country but are not considered certified in the U.S. Lack of apprenticeships as a pipeline to living wage jobs, leaving skilled people in low-wage survival jobs.
  - High wage expectation specifically for retail field/job seekers preferring full time employment when part time is most prominently what is available
  - Not enough ways to specify the employer posting/job details to find works specifically open to that position & reach interested parties.

#### **What is the most important change you would like to see in our workforce system?**

- (3) Increased partnerships with the business community
- (2) Other
  - Targeted effort to attract food service managers and chefs
  - Focus on better advertising for specific fields/offering descriptions for specific jobs to get candidates.
- (1) Increase training for and focus on lower skilled workers

#### **What is the second most important change you would like to see in our workforce system?**

- (3) Increase training for and focus on lower skilled workers
- (2) Increased training for and focus on professionalism skills (soft skills) development
- (1) Increased training for and focus on higher skilled workers

#### **In addition to anything mentioned in the previous questions, are there challenges to address or changes you want to see in our community workforce development efforts?**

- Two distinct tracks: one for underemployed skilled workers, who may lack US credentials, and another for under skilled clients to get them into entry level work.



## ***Environmental scan discussion on December 4, 2020 (EC)***

**What's the most important factor/change in your environment right now that might impact what you do or what difference you can make in the community over time?**

- Digital acceleration
  - how do we support people and businesses in the virtual world?
  - internal capabilities and structure
  - what does the external workforce need to come back to jobs?
  - what does the current workforce need – skill needs have changed rapidly
  - digital literacy more essential
  - recruitment – new needs for employers given the digital acceleration
  - Automation – places that did not have automation before may add it and eliminate the need for some jobs
- Diversity and inclusion landscape in focus
- Gig economy – managing multiple jobs
- Pandemic-related impact -- Work from home dramatically increased, reducing business in a number of sectors (for example, transportation, hospitality)

### **Where and why have we been successful in the past?**

- Face to face education and training
- Targeting the gaps strategically with resources
- Culinary and hospitality – credentialing and out placement
- Skilled up a lot in technology related jobs
- Bringing people together to access other funding
- Contacting people directly

### **Where do we want to develop as a region?**

- Collaborative planning with businesses – businesses articulate their needs so that we can build the right programs for them, with appropriate on and off ramps
- New Silicon Valley – trying to create an inclusive and equitable tech sector
- Getting great commitment from the employers around DEI and consideration of individuals who may not have been historically considered -- let go of the 4-year degree requirement
- Help the workforce be more productive at all levels of education and training and be invested in their career development
- Continue to strategically address worker shortages



## ***Environmental scan discussion on December 17, 2020 (RWC & One-Stop)***

### **What do you think is the greatest challenge related to workforce issues in our community?**

- (14) Lack of employer understanding of how the workforce system can assist them
- (9) Lack of community awareness of workforce assistance services available at the Alexandria Workforce Development Center and Arlington Employment Center
- (3) Not enough job seekers to meet employer demand
- (4) Other
  - Lack of community understanding of high school and community college programs focused on meeting the needs of the increasingly technical and increasingly global workforce
  - Focusing on skilled job seekers
  - Everyone's lack of awareness of the resources at One Stop Centers, the community career opportunities, and training/education opportunities

### **What is the most important change you would like to see in our workforce system?**

- (14) Increased partnerships with the business community
- (5) Increased training for and focus on professionalism skills (soft skills) development
- (3) increased training for and focus on lower skilled workers
- (2) Increased training for and focus on higher skilled workers
- (1) Focus on a specific area of workforce development
- (2) Other
  - We need to build and utilize the capacity to grow our own technical workers
  - Companies need to better use the programs we have to attract and retain workers

### **Further discussion based on the poll questions**

- We don't have enough people in our region to fill all of the job openings, even if we employed every unemployed person in Arlington
- Workers lack career-focused/career-oriented learning skills – the ability to connect what I know from prior work to what you (the prospective employer) are looking for in this job opening -- these are the specific soft skills that are missing
- Workers with professional skills need a connection with employers looking for people like them (said by someone who worked with visually challenged)
- Employers not utilizing the community college students who have training in technical skills they need
- Employers need to better understand that there are people available who can meet their needs – although they may need to provide some on the job training
- Apprenticeships could make a big difference – a one-year apprenticeship puts you in the “1-3 years’ experience required” bucket, where there are currently 97,000 job openings vs 5000 job openings in the “0-3 years’ experience required”.
- The apprenticeship process is difficult to understand

### Where do you want to see development as a region?

- Strengthen relationships between education (K-12, Higher Ed, and Training providers) and employers (all of them, not just Amazon, etc.)
- Focus on 1) Gig/Independent Economy Workers and business owners; 2) Ensuring equitable access to technology sector opportunities
- Become a magnet for technical employers and talented employees seeking a community supportive of progressive policies and education programs.
- See communities have pipeline from schools to post-secondary education/credentials to workforce
- Deepen relationships and establish connections within community to become better known resource
- Have job seekers in career paths that are of interest and needed by area employers
- All facets of the workforce system are utilized
- Expanded meaningful work-based learning
- Cultivating talent development to meet opportunities current and future
- Access to meaningful employment for minorities 18-24 years old
- A workforce system that supports Gen Y and Gen Z entrepreneurship mindset
- A multi-layered approach that enables us to fill jobs, leverage school to employment pipeline, workforce training and community partnerships
- Process that connects all stakeholders and is well communicated
- Increased programs of diverse backgrounds that match unemployed and employers
- Career options are brought to young students (for example, the Danville Virginia model of workforce development)

## ***Strategic plan development—Mission, Vision, and Goals***

### **Mission**

#### **From the 2016-2020 Plan (updated January 28, 2019)**

##### **Mission**

We help drive Alexandria City's and Arlington County's economic growth by implementing an effective and efficient workforce ecosystem that delivers innovative, integrated, data-driven products and services designed and aligned to meet the needs of businesses and job seekers. We hold ourselves accountable to the system's goals and support high-impact outcomes.

##### **Executive Committee Feedback**

- Include concepts of diversity/inclusion in Mission statement

##### **RWC/OSO Feedback**

- Equity is a different, and important idea that needs to be included
- Equity and inclusion need to be operationalized in our strategies

- Mention of “community” would be good

## Vision statement—How the world will be different because of what we do (a word picture of the future)

### From the 2016-2020 Plan (updated January 28, 2019)

#### Vision

The Alexandria/Arlington Workforce System envisions a region where every business has access to a qualified, job-ready workforce and every resident has the skills needed to connect with meaningful employment and advance in a career.

#### Executive Committee Feedback

- No changes

#### RWC/OSO Feedback

- No changes

## Goal 1 Context: Prior Goal and Feedback to Date



**Goal 1:** Help individuals gain access to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and provide opportunities for career progression by providing equitable and universal service delivery

### Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 1, December 4, 2020

- Entry?? “career” word?? Launch pad
- Work readiness
- Viable and sustainable career pathways
- Benefits also important – not just wages

### RWC/OSO Ideas for Regional Goal 1, December 17, 2020

- Living wage vs. Family-sustaining wage
- All goals should include diversity and inclusion

## Goal 2 Context: Prior Goal and Feedback to Date



**Goal 2:** Increase business engagement and deliver value to business customers by filling jobs in high-demand occupations that are strategic to Virginia's economy and strengthen Virginia's regions

### Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 2

- Keep as is

### RWC/OSO Ideas for Regional Goal 2

- Address regionality
- Need more institutional support
- Should "customers" be "partners"
- Diversity and inclusion
- "High Demand" should not just mean highly technical jobs – make sure this is clear in strategies
- "New normal" – virtual work and ability to be employed outside the area – consider this in strategies

## Goal 3 Context: Prior Goal and Feedback to Date



**Goal 3:** Develop a qualified and desirable workforce with the skills, competencies, and credentials that meets the current and anticipated business needs of Virginia

### Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 3

- Professionalism skills (soft skills)
- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills

### Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 3

- Empowered workforce
- Institutional support
- Current essential skills not 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- Workplace readiness skills not professionalism skills
- Diversity and inclusion

## Goal 4 Context: Prior Goal and Feedback to Date



**Goal 4:** Strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts to promote workforce services and stimulate career awareness

### **Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 4**

- Target rather than strengthen
- Focused
- Strengthening is needed

### **Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 4**

- Add “pathways”, tying career awareness to the “mission critical/in demand” work today and beyond
- Institutional support and sustainability’
- Outreach means communication
- Diversity and inclusion

## **Goal 5 Context: Prior Goal and Feedback to Date**



**Goal 5:** Reduce workforce system barriers through collaborative integration and innovative solutions

### **Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 5**

- Language barriers, literacy, etc.
- Increase access instead of reduce barriers? Improve awareness?
- Lack of paid sick leave

### **Executive Committee Ideas for Regional Goal 5**

- Sustainability especially important in this goal
- “Collaborative, coordinated, innovative...”

***Draft Strategies (from Jan 4, 2021 session with One-Stop Ops) and staff feedback on those draft Strategies (from Jan 7, 2021 sessions)***

- See all points in blue font below.

## **Goal 1: Build Better Employer Relationships**

Build better employer relationships **so that we can deliver value to customers** by filling their in-demand jobs that are strategic to our diverse economy.

### **Draft Strategies for Goal 1 (Jan 4, 2021 session, One-Stop Ops)**

- 1.1 Develop new business partnerships with those who have not used or have underutilized the workforce system
  - We need our business developers to be more present in the business community (out of the office most of the time)
    - Restructure so that the business developers do not carry caseloads – case management crowds out time for business development
    - Train business developers in networking skills – these are very different from case management or ESS skills
    - Instruct business developers to attend business events – conferences, local association meetings, etc., where business people normally go
    - We need to find ways to overcome the reality of turnover in business HR departments
    - Building business relationships that yield benefit takes diligence, consistency and time – we have to be committed to our contacts and for the long term
  - Ideas for new business partnerships
    - Focus on smaller companies who may need us more and don't seem to know us
    - Focus on businesses that have higher paid job openings
    - Focus on IT companies where security clearance is not needed
    - Cultivate companies where internships and apprenticeships may be possible
    - We should go after federal agencies (e.g DHS) – they are amazed that we can do these job fairs and the advertisement, etc.
  - Help businesses see the benefits of working with the WDCs
    - Business have their hiring processes mapped out – figure out how we can plug in and how we can add value
    - We can help businesses with their diversity and inclusion goals

- When a new business comes to the area, local officials could set up an agreement or some incentive for them to use the workforce centers for hiring or as part of their hiring process
- We can support work-based learning to give them a chance to “try out” a new employee
- We are truly business developers – we offer business solutions
- Help business work with us – a two-way street where we share data and information – so that we can maximize the value we add to their efforts
- Do software application workshops for businesses (for example, Excel classes) and charge the businesses – this will help them know us, we will be adding value to their workforce and can make money (maybe to help with work-based learning funding)
- Consider taking Business Services out of the Workforce Centers to create business services branding
- Consider charging something for business services – when it is free people see it as less valuable
- Leverage workforce volunteers to open doors to new and existing businesses

## 1.2 Increase quality and frequency of communication and collaboration with other regional workforce systems to support employer recruitment goals

- We need a sharable database between Alexandria and Arlington so that we don't overcommunicate with some employers and undercommunicate with others
- Regional cooperation would help us have the job seekers we need to make this valuable to employers
- State-wide job fairs have been well received and effective – becoming more virtual has helped us see these as viable

*And maximize the outcomes of...*

*1.3 Build relationships with employers so that matches between their needs and job seekers can be facilitated*

*1.4 Use data to help develop employer engagement targets*

*1.5 Provide a rapid response to businesses that have layoffs, and assist affected employees*

*1.6 Provide assessment tools, for example, Career Scope, to align participant interests and skills with job opportunities*



*1.7 Ensure that students and other job seekers are considering the full range of job opportunities and careers, not just those that require higher education*

## Goal 2: Skill People Up!

**Develop** a proactive, confident, and qualified **workforce** with the essential workforce readiness competencies and credentials that meet current and anticipated business needs.

### Draft Strategies for Goal 2 (Jan 4, 2021 session, One-Stop Ops)

2.1 Improve internal collaboration among workforce system partners to ensure that development opportunities for job seekers are maximized

- We need an inventory of assessment tools that we have or that ESS know are available to help assess job seekers
- It would be helpful to have a central point of contact for NVCC; we need a closer relationship with them
- Need a system for communicating internally about what workers are in the pipeline and what workers are needed for employers
- How do we build efficiencies across Alexandria and Arlington – for example, collaborative workshops that can be delivered by staff in either location

2.2 Ensure that job seekers are prepared for a more virtual, technologically driven workforce environment

2.3 Increase/develop a case coordination style of customer service, following up when training/education referrals are made and getting feedback from customers about the effectiveness of our efforts to help them develop

- We need to do a better job upfront of assessing job seekers and helping them create plans that are realistic for them and that match employer needs
- A closer case coordination style might help us understand more quickly that a client is not doing their part to be successful and we can spend less wasted time
- Quality and quantity compete – we need creative ways for follow up as the ESS don't normally have time to do this
- Use the WDC and our human services departments as work-based learning sites – for example, customer service, IT; Goodwill has used this model

*And maximize the outcomes of...*

2.4 Provide education and training opportunities for job seekers

*2.5 Provide work-based learning opportunities for job seekers*

*2.6 Provide cross-cultural orientation to new immigrants so that their job seeking expectations are appropriate and efforts to find work are successful*

### **Goal 3: Connect People to Jobs**

**Connect people to job opportunities** that pay a living wage with benefits and that provide equitable opportunities for launching sustainable career pathways for work that is in demand.

#### **Draft Strategies for Goal 3 (Jan 4, 2021 session, One-Stop Ops)**

3.1 Increase coordination and partnerships with other regional workforce systems to maximize job seekers' employment opportunities

- Sharing ideas and practices would be helpful – e.g., quarterly trainings for case managers, youth workers, those working with dislocated workers, etc. Help each other with roadblocks and challenges

3.2 Elevate work-based learning experiences to become a priority service of our region

- Need to have a thoughtful strategy behind the development of expanding these opportunities
  - We need messaging to help employers see the benefits of work-based learning and we need to place the right fit job seekers into the opportunities
  - Most important is matching for right fit - that's what leads to ongoing employment for the job seeker and the maximum employer satisfaction
  - Customer service and IT positions seem are well suited and meet a business need
  - Workplace learning is more appealing to the job seeker when it is longer rather than short-term
- Creative funding is needed to support work-based learning
  - Could we get a line item in the City Council and BOS budgets for apprenticeships and work-based learning to support our businesses
  - Offer tax incentives to businesses to take on work-based learning
  - Develop some incentives for job seekers who accept unpaid learning opportunities
  - Focus on short-term apprenticeship programs, especially unregistered ones (Maryland is very aggressive and innovative in this space)

*And maximize the outcomes of...*

*3.3 Post relevant job opportunities produce and/or participate in virtual or in person hiring events*

*3.4 Provide connections for job seekers to work-based learning opportunities*

*3.5 Monitor and analyze labor market information so that the system is aware of current business needs*

*3.6 Keep school systems informed of labor market information*

*3.7 Provide ongoing training to staff ensuring their up-to-date awareness of all the resources for job seeker preparation*

#### **Goal 4: Ensure We Are Accessible to Everyone**

Ensure **equitable access to the local workforce system** and its services through collaborative partnerships and coordinated, innovative solutions.

##### **Draft Strategies for Goal 4 (Jan 4, 2021 session, One-Stop Ops)**

4.1 Provide all communication about and from the workforce system in the languages most often spoken/read in our community

- We ask for this repeatedly and are given many reasons why it is not possible to do
- Hire contractors or freelancers to make this happen
- Seek more funding for vocational language services (Alexandria City has funded this and it has been very popular and successful- VESL)

4.2 Improve case coordination and follow along, ensuring that there is support for job seekers who encounter barriers

- We need more supportive services to support those with significant barriers
  - Co-enrollment – multiple programs working with the same person to wrap around this person to help them meet their goals
  - Community mentors would be helpful for new immigrants
  - Could we find volunteers to help us with job seekers who need extra supports
  - We need a mental health person in our job centers – we don't know how to navigate these challenges – an immediate warm handoff

- We need an acculturation program in our communities – not just for workforce services but for other things as well
- We have a women’s cohort for Afghani women. We could expand this model to more groups

*And maximize the outcomes of...*

*4.3 Communicate with community-based agencies (for example, social services) to ensure that their customers know about and can access workforce resources*

*4.4 Communicate with students and their counselors about workforce system services*

*4.5 Ensure that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to workforce system services*

## Goal 5: Better Promote What We Do

**Promote the workforce system** and its services through focused communication with employers, schools, and potential employees to meet the needs of all.

### Draft Strategies for Goal 5 (Jan 4, 2021 session, One-Stop Ops)

5.1 Develop and implement targeted outreach activities about the workforce system for schools that would encourage students to use the workforce system for summer and post-graduation jobs

- Build a strong connection with NVCC and Universities by establishing points of contact of help us make student connections and support their Career Services efforts’
- Collaboration needs to happen at higher levels not just at case manager level
- Link to the gifted students’ programs in high schools and middle schools

5.2 Develop and implement a broad public relations campaign for the community and our regional system about our activities and needs, including having articles written about our services or customers, publishing articles in business community newsletters or speaking at business community events

- “Re-branding” is needed
  - We have got to get people over seeing us as “the unemployment office” and we just have unemployed, low-wage people

- Being connected to Human Services doesn't help us recruit higher level job seekers
- We have to change our image to show that we serve professionals and not just low income folks
- Less talk of the "free" part (at no cost is better) – don't want to leave the impression we are cheap; position things to businesses as "you are paying for this through your taxes"
- Businesses think our clients don't have skills
- We need better digital communication about our services and successes
  - We need to better use social media – we don't have an active LinkedIn account, putting something on the VEC page is impossible, we need a You Tube channel (Sal and Jonatan have both done this for themselves); Twitter is being used by Arlington
  - We need our You Tube videos in other languages
  - Podcasts to do outreach. Target businesses and job seekers who access this tool. Alexandria is doing a Podcast and it is an interesting endeavor
  - Have a virtual open house and stream on Facebook Live
- Market our services thoughtfully
  - We want people to see us as the go-to solution; however, we have to be sure we are not over-promising in our effort to be helpful
  - Sometimes we don't actively promote because we cannot deliver – e.g, "internship opportunities" that we do not have! Staff don't like looking incompetent, which is how this comes across when it happens
  - We need professional development for workforce staff so that people can better communicate who we are and what we do

*And maximize the outcomes of...*

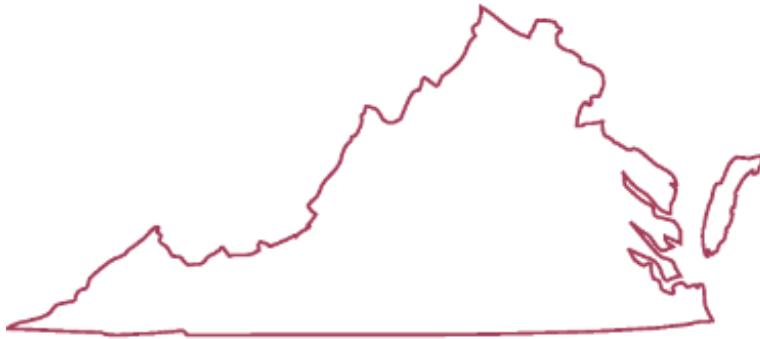
*5.3 Develop and implement targeted outreach activities about the workforce system for employers, especially those who do not utilize or underutilize the workforce system, and promote work-based learning to all employers*

*5.4 Communicate to other regional systems about our activities and our needs*

*5.5 Actively educate local elected officials and others who can support the workforce system*

***Background information used for context throughout the project***

**Virginia's WIOA Vision**



**Virginia's Workforce Innovation and  
Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined  
State Plan (Plan) 2020-2024**

envisions a state workforce system in which programs and resources are aligned to achieve the best possible results for Virginia's businesses and job seekers.

**VISION**

Guiding the Plan is Governor Ralph Northam's vision for the delivery of workforce development services:

*During the life of this plan, we will improve economic opportunity for all Virginians by serving those who are not yet earning a sustainable wage and, as important, by focusing the resources and mechanisms of our workforce system to recruit people into the workforce and connect them to businesses in high demand industries.*

With this vision, the Governor charges workforce development services providers to engage with populations that historically have been underserved in the Commonwealth. By actively rethinking who is served and how Virginia serves them, service providers can create an equitable distribution of services in the Commonwealth.



## **Mission Statement: State and Local Codified Purpose**

### **MISSION STATEMENT – WHY DO WE EXIST?**

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#### *Virginia Board of Workforce Development: Codified Purpose*

The purpose of the Board shall be to assist and advise the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Chief Workforce Development Advisor in meeting workforce development needs in the Commonwealth through recommendation of policies and strategies to increase coordination and thus efficiencies of operation between all education and workforce programs with responsibilities and resources for employment, occupational training, and support connected to workforce credential and job attainment.

#### *Local Workforce Development Boards: Codified Purpose*

As a "regional convener," the local workforce development board is responsible for coordinating business, economic development, labor, regional planning commissions, education at all levels, and human services organizations to focus on community workforce issues and the development of solutions to current and prospective business needs for a skilled labor force at the regional level.



## State Strategies for Each Goal

# STRATEGIC GOALS AND ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES



**Goal 1:** Help individuals gain access to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and provide opportunities for career progression by providing equitable and universal service delivery

- a. Launch a fully integrated common access portal across Plan partners
- b. Leverage the Accessibility Task Force to ensure universal service delivery
- c. Use technology to bridge systems to provide universal access
- d. Develop career pathways for customers that align with the workforce needs of target industry sectors and also provide career advancement opportunities
- e. Use labor market information to better understand opportunities to improve access



**Goal 2:** Increase business engagement and deliver value to business customers by filling jobs in high-demand occupations that are strategic to Virginia's economy and strengthen Virginia's regions

- a. Leverage state and local Business Solutions Teams to ensure coordinated and consistent service delivery
- b. Survey businesses and use labor market information to understand where demand is and skills that are needed
- c. Utilize sector strategies to engage businesses, economic development, education and training providers, and other community organizations, such as chambers of commerce





**Goal 3:** Develop a qualified and desirable workforce with the skills, competencies, and credentials that meets the current and anticipated business needs of Virginia

- a. Utilize the national skills index to determine the skills that matter to businesses and cross-walk the index to career pathways
- b. Allocate resources to programs and initiatives that demonstrate positive outcomes for participants
- c. Increase co-enrollment to provide customers with the best possible outcome
- d. Strengthen alignment of service delivery with other workforce programs, such as corrections, social services, and veterans services



**Goal 4:** Strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts to promote workforce services and stimulate career awareness

- a. Enhance brand awareness of Virginia Career Works as the American Job Centers in the Commonwealth
- b. Expand connections between businesses and Virginia Career Works Centers to align services and strategies to meet business needs
- c. Increase utilization of sustainable work-based learning models, including Registered Apprenticeships
- d. Coordinate with workforce partners, including career and technical education (e.g., Perkins V), to promote career readiness through all post-secondary training and education opportunities



**Goal 5:** Reduce workforce system barriers through collaborative integration and innovative solutions

- a. Include non-traditional, non-mandatory programs as service delivery partners across Virginia's workforce system
- b. Leverage discretionary funds and support innovative initiatives to remove barriers to employment (e.g., affordable childcare, transportation, housing)
- c. Support the development of workforce professionals to improve the capacity of the system
- d. Create opportunities for sharing promising practices among service delivery partners