

Commonwealth of Virginia
Workforce Investment Act Title IB Program Annual Report for
July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Introduction:

Virginia is pleased to submit this annual report, providing an overview of our successes and some challenges in administering the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in Program Year 2010.

While we are fortunate in that many of our indicators of economic health suggest that we are faring better than the nation as a whole, job seekers and employers have continued need for workforce development services. WIA also has played an important role in supporting the job creation and educational attainment goals articulated by Governor McDonnell. This report highlights not just service numbers and program statistics, but also some insights into the people we have been able to help and the innovative strategies we have employed to continue to meet the challenges of a recovering economy.

I. Summary overview of performance and spending results

A. WIA Formula Activities

In its service to nearly 19,855 WIA participants during PY2010, Virginia exceeded negotiated performance levels for 5 of 6 adult and dislocated worker measures, while meeting performance in the sixth measure. Most notably, on average, 75.7% of our adult and dislocated workers were placed into employment; with 89.5% being retained in employment. These are both increases from the previous program year. It is also worth noting that employment and wage performance for those receiving training services was higher than those that did not, providing evidence that there is value in skill attainment, particularly in a weakened economy. Some performance highlights related to some target populations include: (1) Adult participants receiving some form of public assistance when entering the program achieved a higher level of entered employment than the overall adult population, and (2) veterans within the dislocated worker population achieved higher results across the board than their non-veteran counterparts. Some 200,000 individuals received some form of universal (core services) assistance in our one stop centers.

While Youth the same level of success cannot be reported in the youth programs against negotiated goals that in some cases were set at levels higher than actual results of other states that had previously been reporting under common measures, we are pleased to note that in our first year of reporting under the common measure, five of our 15 local areas met or exceeded all negotiated levels, and in other cases, levels have progressed throughout the year. Virginia continues its efforts to assist local area youth providers in the design and operation of youth programs and looks forward to continued improvement of our

performance as a result of local efforts to redesign their strategies toward better serving youth while also improving reportable performance in the process.

The following table illustrates the distinct participant counts for PY2010; along with the per-participant cost breakdown of local WIA formula funds in servings those individuals. PY10 service levels were fairly consistent with the previous program year. The average cost of serving WIA participants among the three funding streams was \$1,253, which is slightly below last year’s levels. As would be expected, the youth program saw the highest participant costs due to the more extensive range and types of services provided to that population, followed by the adult program. The dislocated worker program exhibited the lowest per participant cost of WIA funds; likely due to the availability of other resources such as Trade, as well as the fact that dislocated workers may require fewer interventions to re-enter the job market as opposed to those that are entering the job market for the first time.

	PY10 Participants	Cost per Participant
Adults	5,855	\$1,390
Dislocated Worker	10,939	\$780
Youth	3,031	\$2,713
Total	19,855	\$1,253

B. Statewide Rapid Response

During PY 2010, Virginia’s State Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU) transitioned from a state level service delivery to a regional model, using designated Workforce Development Community College Programs. To increase efficiency and in conjunction with the transition, virtual employee needs assessments and automated evaluation and reporting tools were developed. As a result of increased data collection, this report will include services provided to those employers who filed a Worker Adjustment and retraining Notification (WARN) and those who did not (NON WARN).

During PY 2010 the DWU received 58 notices in response to the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. Compared to the previous year, the number of WARN notices increased by 8. Although the number of individual WARNs increased, the total number of impacted workers decreased.

	PY10	PY09	PY08
WARN Notices	58	50	115
# of Workers affected	5,648	7,520	19,896
Average # of workers per event	97	150	173

	PY10
Non-WARN Businesses served	46
# of workers affected	2793
Average # of workers per event	61

The non-WARN customers served included defense contractors, federal workers and municipality employees impacted by public education reductions. The disestablishment of the Joint Forces Command in Suffolk has impacted the eastern region and northern regions of the Commonwealth, continuing through PY 2011.

Rapid Response staff contacted company officials within 48 hours of receipt of a WARN, followed by employer briefings held with management and planned employee briefings desired by the employer. Most briefings were held before the workers left their respective companies. Employee briefings, led by one of four Regional Rapid Response Coordinators, were provided by a team of local workforce development partners who provided direct services. The Rapid Response Coordinators were instrumental in planning and resourcing Job Fairs, onsite employer resource centers, independent employer resource centers, customized transition workshops and registration for WIA and partner services.

Dislocated Worker Unit Initiatives for PY 2010

- Rapid Response Summits of regional workforce and economic development partners were conducted quarterly. This facilitated the development of Forecasting Teams to aid the layoff aversion process.
- Created a "Follow Along" card which is sent to employees to encourage them to seek services through the One Stops, Virginia Employment Commission, United Way's 2-1-1, and local community colleges after they have been displaced from their company.
- Planned and developed Employee Briefing Webinar for 193 Flextronics employees who were located throughout the state that included the DWU, Virginia Employment Commission and Workforce Centers. Two sessions were conducted to accommodate all customers.
- Expanded state and regional rapid response website pages.
- The rapid response regional staff developed Regional Plans of Service in conjunction with workforce and economic development partners.
- The State DWU expanded working relationship with the Existing Business Services division of the Department of Business Assistance to facilitate layoff mitigation.
- The regional programs use newsletters to provide reminder of where to go for help after the employer's door has closed.
- The DWU provided support and consulted with the Governor's Military Liaison to the Joint Forces Command, the Office of Economic Adjustment, Suffolk Economic Development and the Eastern Virginia Workforce Partners to open a customized Transition Center.

II. Success Stories – The personal side of providing service

Often, these types of annual report documents are dominated by raw numbers, and some analytical discussion of what those numbers might mean. We are taking the opportunity again this year to continue something we started last year, and devoting some of our report to personalized snapshots showing how WIA makes a difference to those it serves.

Dislocated WIA youth case worker comes full circle

Jenny Lewis is employed with CGI Federal, Inc., (CGI) in Lebanon and will be soon celebrating her third year on the job. CGI Federal Inc. is a subsidiary of CGI Group Inc., which partners with federal agencies and commercial companies to provide information technology support. CGI is celebrating its 35th anniversary this year as one of the largest independent information technology and business process services firms in the world.

Jenny received her Certified Software Tester (CSTE) certification through the WIA Incumbent Worker Program. Since that training, she has been able to grow and leverage her skills on a new client project about which she is very enthusiastic.

According to Jenny, “WIA has been a ‘full circle’ experience for me and I will always support it in any way I can. Back in 2003, I was a Youth Services case worker for a Community Action Program until June 2003, when that department was downsized and I became unemployed. It was the first time I had ever ‘lost a job’ because I have pretty much always worked/had a job ever since I was 14 years old. The WIA paid for me to go back to school through the ‘Dislocated Worker Program’. I received my Associate of Applied Science in Information Technology in 2005. I then went on to East Tennessee State University, where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Digital Media in 2008. Three months later I started here at CGI as a software tester. The WIA helped me get the very important certified software tester certification. Now, I am officially a Consultant for CGI.”

“It is my honor to share my story of how WIA has twice helped me succeed in my career goals. It truly is a full circle experience. To tell you what an extreme difference it has made...when I started school in 2003, I couldn’t even touch type and I barely knew what email was. I was scared to death of learning something new and was afraid I might not do well in school.

“Well, I can type super-fast now (and still carry on a conversation) and I am a software tester with two degrees. It is something that I never thought would happen 8 years ago!”

Hope and help in an area hit hard by the recession

The West Piedmont area has some of the highest unemployment rates in Virginia. Like so many residents in the area, Sean Preston, a single parent of three boys, had lost his job and had troubles finding employment. With his family’s well-being at risk, Preston took

advice from the Department of Social Services to seek additional assistance through the Virginia Workforce Center in Chatham. Preston received counseling and took job readiness classes to help him prepare a resume and cover letters, improve his interview skills and learn how to tell his story on paper and online job applications. His case manager notes, "We also encouraged him to complete his GED, so he would be able to gain stable employment to support his family."

By April, Preston completed his job readiness classes and started working on his GED. During this time, Preston was approved to enter into the center's adult internship program. Preston was placed as an intern at Yorktown Cabinetry in April, which he completed in June. He continued to work at Yorktown for four more months through a staffing agency, and by September, had earned his GED. On October 25th, Yorktown hired Preston to work full-time as their employee.

Engaging youth

The Youth Career Center of Hampton Roads operates out of the popular Pembroke Mall in Virginia Beach, in an effort to reach out to the 14-21 year old age group "on their turf". The Center hosts a variety of career development activities including workshops, employer networking opportunities and practical experience fairs.

Joshua Ballou had walked past the Center many times before finally coming in with a friend to participate a Game Night event. The next day, he returned for assistance with finding a part-time job. Using employment strategies he learned at the Center, Josh secured a part-time job as a Carpentry Assistant. When asked about his experience, he said the staff "was very helpful and understanding and helped me prepare for interviews and writing resumes." Josh graduated from high school and will be attending Tidewater Community College in January. He plans to transfer to ODU years and become an author of children's books.

III. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies

Virginia continues to gain national recognition for its work in career pathways, as evidenced externally in its work with the National Governors Association, the national office of the Department of Labor and private foundations, and internally through a strong multi-disciplinary career pathways advisory group that includes education, economic development and workforce agency partners. WIA statewide funds have been critical in many ways to advancing career pathway efforts.

a. Incentivizing regional behaviors

Blending funding sources from the Ford Foundation grant to the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education and a US Department of Labor Career Pathways grant to the VCCS, four regional career pathways system grant were awarded to foster collaboration between WIBs and community colleges, along with regional employers, workforce and economic development, school divisions and community based organizations. These initiatives follow a six step process established by US Department

of Labor for bringing together partners from education, industry and economic development to design and provide education and training, career coaching and support services necessary to preparing emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers for job placement and career progression in industry sectors critical to regional and state economic development. To date, regional career pathways systems in Virginia are targeting populations from middle school students to displaced workers to prepare them for careers in high performance manufacturing, allied health, and energy.

Building upon this foundation, a portion of WIA Incentive Awards issued during the program year was used to fund two \$75,000 grants to foster local coordination. Region 2000 and the Greater Peninsula will focus on improving local performance through initiatives that support career pathways: including development of a comprehensive career pathway information portal for WIA Youth participants, a Future Focus Expo to connect youth to employers and education and training leading to career placement, an in school Youth Career Café, and an out of school youth Middle College, or bridge program, serving low skilled, low wage young adults without a high school diploma that will prepare participants for the GED, postsecondary education, and careers in the allied health sector.

b. On Ramp

Implemented in Summer 2010, On Ramp, supported through Rapid Response funds, helps dislocated adults attain postsecondary education credentials that are in demand for emerging or current career opportunities in community college service regions in the Commonwealth that have higher than average rates of unemployment or recent business closings or layoffs. Currently operating in 16 of 23 community colleges, On Ramp provides eligible participants with scholarships for community college tuition and fees, textbooks and required instructional supplies. In addition to fiscal support, On Ramp participants receive career and educational coaching along with the training as needed to improve job search and placement skills. On Ramp tuition support may be applied to credit bearing programs of study that confer associate degrees and community college diplomas or certificates or to non-credit programs that prepare participants for industry certifications or licensures.

In its first program year, 2010-11, On Ramp served 1,103 dislocated workers who gained 357 occupationally related credentials including Nursing, Dental Assisting, Respiratory Therapy, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Transcription, Medical Office Specialist, Certified Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Veterinary Technician Assistant, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Industrial Technology, Welding, Truck Driving and more. On Ramp students enrolled in credit bearing programs of study earned an average of 11 credits per semester with 79% of On Ramp students in credit bearing programs persisting in their studies from fall 2010 to spring 2011. An average of \$1,423 was awarded to On Ramp students in financial aid in 2010-11.

On Ramp is one strategy through which the Virginia Community College System is striving to realize the Governor's goal of increasing postsecondary education credential attainment rates by Virginians of all ages by 100,000 over the next fifteen years, as well as support the national effort to focus on credential, certificate and degree attainment as articulated in TEGE 15-10. The On Ramp program is innovative in that it effectively fosters close collaboration among community college financial aid and workforce development divisions as well as community colleges and One Stop Career Centers and Workforce Investment Boards. The program continues in 16 colleges across the Commonwealth in 2011-12. This year, approximately \$2 million in Rapid Response funds will support On Ramp services including financial aid to participants and On Ramp career coaches based at all 16 colleges offering the program.

c. Addressing basic skills needs of the working-age population

While Virginia's educational attainment is slightly above the national average in terms of individuals with a high school education, current figures indicate that approximately 13% of our population does not have a high school diploma or equivalent. Two efforts to help this population and Virginia's overall quality of life, workforce preparedness and economic potential are highlighted below, both of which were supported in part by WIA state funds:

i. The Middle College program serves individuals 18 to 24 who lack a high school diploma or GED credential. The three-semester community college based program serves to increase the employability of participants through a program that simultaneously provides them with preparation and testing for a GED, a start towards a community college certificate or degree, and a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). The Middle College model supports targeted costs such as basic skills instruction, access to Career Readiness Certificate training and assessments, community college tuition, and comprehensive support services including soft skills development.

An added emphasis on adult career coaching services, contextualized curriculum that integrates basic skills development and occupationally specific technical training, and expanded partnerships with adult education and employers are developments that are coming to Virginia's Middle Colleges.

2010 Performance:

- The total number of Middle College students increased 23 percent from 912 to 1,118.
- A total of 539 GEDs were awarded to Middle College students.
- A total of 357 first-time enrollees received a GED within one year.
- A total of 135 GED completers enrolled in postsecondary education within one year.
- A total of 271 GED completers were awarded a CRC.

ii. The Adult Education Transition Specialist program was established through an agreement with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The two

transition specialist positions, in South Hampton Roads (Portsmouth, Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Suffolk) and Northern Virginia (Prince William, Alexandria, Fairfax, and Arlington), worked with local adult education programs, work force investment boards, community colleges, and other stakeholders to ensure that individuals in these regions who had taken the GED Tests, but who had not completed or passed, were recruited into state-funded GED preparatory classes to receive instruction leading to the readiness to successfully complete the GED Tests. The specialists then coordinated GED testing sessions for the recruits. After the recruits passed the GED Tests, the transition specialists provided counseling and assistance with enrollment in postsecondary education.

Indicators of success for the program were established. Success was tracked against the number of contacts that had taken a portion of the GED Tests and were successfully recruited back into the program and then completed the full battery of tests. Also tracked were the numbers of contacts who completed, but did not pass, the GED Tests, and subsequently were reengaged and completed a retest. Additionally, the number of recruits that passed the GED Tests and the number of GED passers that enrolled in some postsecondary educational activity were also tracked. The specialists exceeded all performance goals. Most notably, GED Test pass target results were 110% of the target goals, with 636 recruits passing. 207 of those passers went on to enroll in postsecondary activities. Because of the program's success, the MOU between VCCS and VDOE has been extended another year.

d. Career Readiness Certificate

With support from the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC), the numbers of Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) recipients continues to grow in our efforts to certify the workplace readiness skills of Virginians. The Virginia CRC is based on ACT's WorkKeys® assessments – Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information – that provide individuals a workplace skills certification that employers can use to make reliable decisions on hiring and training. Statewide funds have been used to assist in various CRC-related efforts, and during PY2010, Virginia awarded approximately 7,500 CRCs. This was a 30 percent increase over the previous year.

Some other highlights occurring during the program year include the following:

- The CRC has been approved by the Virginia Board of Education as an industry recognized credential that may substitute for the student-selected verified credit toward graduation requirements. State funds for the career and technical education student industry certifications can be used to pay for the CRC.
- A revised website –www.crc.virginia.gov – and database was launched to provide employers, jobseekers and economic development and workforce professionals with information about the CRC. The site provides a user-friendly tool for employers to search data on the skill levels of Virginia's workforce.

- Governor McDonnell presented a public service announcement declaring the impact of the CRC to Virginia's economy by increasing the credentialing and building Virginia's workforce. Other brief testimonials by employers and certificate holders spout the benefits of the CRC for building connections between employer and the workforce.
- A CRC Advisory Council made up of business, economic development, education and workforce leaders was formed and will meet this fall to develop strategies to expand the use of the CRC by education, workforce development and employers

IV. Waivers

Virginia had the following WIA waiver approvals during PY10:

- Reporting against the six common measure as opposed to the 17 separate program measures established in law.

While the waiver was first granted for PY09, Virginia elected not to implement this waiver until PY10. During PY10, technical assistance and training was provided to the 15 local areas on common measures, with a particular emphasis on the youth measure since they are substantially different and require a shift in service strategies for most areas. Now that we have completed one full year of tracking and reporting of the common measures, we can better pinpoint specific areas where continued improvement is needed and develop addition assistance accordingly. A statewide youth program training conference is scheduled for October 24 – 25 of 2011.

- Delay the requirement for local areas to follow the subsequent certification elements for eligible trainer providers after they have been initially certified.

Like the majority of states in the nation, this waiver was obtained by Virginia to reflect the circumstances that have proven to make it very difficult for local workforce areas to collect the statutorily required performance information from training providers in order to achieve subsequent certification. A new state policy was issued to remove the subsequent eligibility process requirements. Local areas are still required to annually review the providers they have approved and use locally-defined measurements to determine continued inclusion of providers.

http://myfuture.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/Workforce/policy00_7_final%20posting_062910.pdf

- The ability for older and out-of-school youth to utilize Individual Training Accounts.

The Department of Labor now recognizes that this waiver has become a "standard operating procedure". It also aligns with Virginia's focus on maximizing opportunities for increased educational and skills levels. The state guidance to local areas in implementing this waiver is posted at this link:

http://www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/Workforce/VWN/VWL0508_modnov2009.pdf

During PY10, 279 older and out-of-school youth received training services via an individual training account. This represents a 55% increase over last year, and all local areas took advantage of this flexibility. The Greater Peninsula area accounted for nearly 30% of the statewide use of this waiver.

- An increase in the amount that local areas can transfer between adult and dislocated worker funds up to 50%.

State policy was issued outlining the requirements that must be met when making a transfer request to the state, along with the procedures to be followed.

https://www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/Workforce/VWN/VWL0204_modfeb2010.pdf.

During PY10, two local areas took advantage of this waiver flexibility in being able to adjust funding to meet local demands. In both cases, the transfers involved moving dislocated worker funding to the adult stream, and equated to 44.6% and 50% of authorized funding respectively. These two requests accounted for 40% of all local transfer activity during PY10.

- The ability for local areas to use up to 20% of their dislocated worker funds to provide incumbent worker training as part of a layoff aversion strategy.

In PY10, 7 out of 15 local areas have implemented or started the process to implement local incumbent worker training policies and procedures to expand the portfolio of services they are able to provide. Some areas have expressed concern about the layoff aversion requirements under the waiver, indicating that many companies may be reluctant to publicly identify that such circumstances exist. Other areas not currently using the waiver option have elected not to do so to focus more on harder to serve adults that are not employed, or are not earning self-sufficient wages.

- The ability for the state to use up to 20% of Rapid Response funds for other allowable statewide activities.

This waiver was not utilized by the Commonwealth during the program year; however, we anticipate that this waiver will prove extremely critical to supporting the types of initiatives discussed in Section III of this report to offset the proposed federal budgetary actions that will reduce available statewide funds from the 15% allowed under existing law to only 5%.

V. Evaluations

A goal for WIA programs and general workforce relative programs in Virginia is to develop methods to improve the quality, use, and accuracy of data to facilitate decision making and policy development. Over the last year, Virginia has implemented several strategies and initiatives to support this goal, including: (1) implementing of the Workforce Data Quality (WDQI) and State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) initiatives, (2) conducting a business needs

assessment of WIA related data and reporting for local workforce investment boards and for the state, (3) revising the state monitoring/evaluation process of programs funded through WIA and (4) sharing performance data with the state workforce board (Virginia Workforce Council). These and other initiatives are outlined in the following sections.

a. Workforce Data Quality and State Longitudinal Data System Initiative

Last November, Virginia received a \$1m USDOL grant to develop a longitudinal data system for workforce data referred to as the Workforce Data Quality Initiative or WDQI. The goals of the grant are to: (1) examine workforce data issues, (2) develop potential strategies to improve workforce data, (3) create a unified method to describe how the workforce development system is serving Virginia, and (4) identify areas of improvement for the workforce development system.

Virginia's approach to developing a state system is unique as it plans to use a federated model of merging data rather than using a traditional data warehousing approach. In addition, WDQI builds on another initiative in Virginia to merge educational records across secondary and postsecondary that is funded by the US Department of Education –referred to as the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). A federated data system allows data to be maintained on agency servers and merges temporary data sets in a de-identified manner to meet a specific research purpose. This model was adopted in Virginia as a solution to state laws restricting the development of large datasets across agencies without a specified purpose and as more cost-effective approach to data warehousing.

The initiative plans to bring together data across several workforce programs including Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, WIA programs, UI claims and wage data, TANF, Rehabilitative Service and registered apprenticeship. The long-term goals are to add other agency data, such as adult education and correctional education. These data will be part of the larger system that includes educational records. Progress is underway on the project with the goal of having initial workforce data merged by summer 2012.

b. Business Needs Assessment for Data and Reporting

In response to a growing need to assist local areas in accessing and reporting accurate data, VCCS staff contracted with the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) to conduct a business needs assessment related to participant, fiscal and labor market data. The assessment involved interviews with local workforce board directors and state level staff, surveys of staff working in the one-stops and site-visits with two local areas. The report outlined several recommendations in the areas outlined above.

As a next step, VCCS staff will review the recommendations with stakeholders and develop a work plan that includes strategies to address the needs outlined. The work plan will act as a guide for state staff in the coming year to prioritize projects and will be informed by WIB directors and local staff.

c. State Monitoring/Evaluation Process

At the beginning of PY 2010, VCCS expanded its Workforce Research and Evaluation unit to include WIA monitoring. Due to staff turnover, two new staff members were hired to conduct monitoring. In addition, the remaining monitor was new to the position, which provided an opportunity for staff to revisit the process of monitoring of WIA programs. The new model assigns the monitors to five specific workforce areas in order for them to develop working relationships with local staff and build trust. The monitors serve as the consultants for the area to assist and act as a “triage” unit for state staff in identifying areas of additional technical assistance, guidance or training.

Over the last year, staff worked to (1) revise all monitoring tools and reports with the input of state and local level staff, (2) develop a monitoring network of staff at the local level to provide consistency of monitoring at the state and local level and (3) improve the relationship with local staff in providing technical assistance.

While the main focus of the monitoring component in the first year was to implement consistency across areas, as well as, providing continuous improvement through comprehensive follow-up, the goals in second year will focus on adding qualitative data to the evaluation process. The first phase of this will begin with the program performance data and individual meetings with local areas to review the performance of WIA programs for PY 20101 and develop technical assistance needs in the coming year. VCCS plans to have the monitoring unit focus on specific areas of need as identified by state and local staff moving forward.

d. Performance Reporting

While a modest step, Virginia is working to raise the level of awareness of the public workforce system through a series of workforce snapshots that are presented at Virginia Workforce Council meetings. The first snapshot reviewed the performance of the WIA program and the next presentation included performance of the federal Vocational Rehabilitative Services program. Presentations expected in the coming year include Wagner-Peyser and Trade Act. The eventual goal of sharing performance data across public workforce systems is to develop a state report card or dashboard of the system to inform policy and decision makers. This initiative aligns with the Workforce Data Quality Initiative outlined above. A state level report card/dashboard is expected to be developed in fall of 2012.

e. Local Workforce Area Evaluations

State WIA funds were used in PY10 to provide for third-party evaluators to review two different local workforce areas (the Capital Region and Shenandoah Valley) so that local level leadership could benefit from an independent analysis of governance, operations and service delivery mechanisms and make recommendations for improvement. While the circumstances in these two areas leading to the evaluations were different, resulting in slightly different scopes of work, both evaluation efforts provided an honest assessment of local conditions that should

enable both areas to effectively move forward in carrying out their duties in an improved manner.