



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

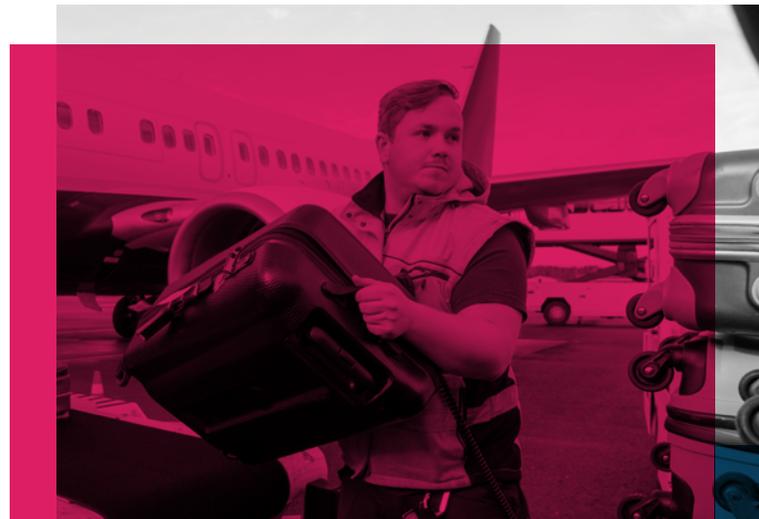
2021 – 2024

We Help Northern Virginia Work.



NORTHERN REGION

February 2021



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INTRODUCTION

In late 2020, the Virginia Career Works – Northern Region Board began the process of revising the current strategic plan.

The planning process included a Strategic Planning Committee made up of VCW Northern members. The Committee met three times to examine current labor market data that would inform strategic challenges over the next 18 months. A focus group of job seekers was also conducted to understand their perceptions of the move to a more virtual service delivery approach and the challenges they face.

The Committee took time to examine the VCW Northern’s vision for impact as the environmental context and needs change. We want to make sure our work remains relevant as the system within which we operate has changed in the short term and may continue to change over the long term. Our discussions included examining how to shift the way programs and services are delivered, what new partnerships need to be forged to extend our reach and impact, and how to use this moment to advocate for systemic change.

Delivering the impact we wish to achieve, to prepare individuals for high demand careers and connect them to businesses, requires talent, systems, and processes that are sustainable. In response to stay-at-home orders across Virginia, our organization had to quickly shift to virtual operations and deal with other challenges to our capacity. Through this planning process we identified four capacity needs that are core to sustainability and we believe are our strengths:

- **Leadership capacity.** We believe we have strong and diffuse leadership that can make quick decisions in response to evolving challenges that keeps the organization resilient.
- **Adaptive capacity.** The importance of adaptability right now is apparent. We considered possible changes in client needs, behaviors, and the operating environment over the next 15 to 18 months, and how the organization might respond.
- **Collaborative capacity.** We want to partner with an expanded set of business organizations. Our assessment is that we have the right organizational pillars: a culture that explicitly calls out the importance of collaboration, a team with collaborative skillsets, and leadership that models and incentivizes collaborative behaviors.
- **Technology capacity.** As we shifted to virtual operations, the need for strong systems and staff who can use them become clear. We made the shift quickly and staff rapidly adapted and learned. Technology capacity is critical to business continuity now and will remain critical during recovery—both for data-informed decision-making, and as a method of delivering services.

We are cognizant of the issues that are keeping job seekers from training, education, and work during this pandemic, including:

- The impact home schooling has on the ability for individuals, particularly women, to go back to work or become available for work.
- The impact the lack of childcare has on an individual’s ability to work and how the lack of childcare in the region has only intensified during the pandemic.

- The pandemic has prevented job-seeking activities for some individuals who lack access to technology or need face to face assistance because workforce centers and agencies are closed.
- The impact the lack of access to the Internet and devices has on limiting an individuals' capacity for distance learning or to work from home.

We believe that the new goal and additional strategies in this Plan will help us to address some of these issues.





ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

- VISION:** We envision a vibrant business and workforce region that is globally competitive.
- MISSION:** We prepare individuals for high demand careers and connect them to businesses.
- VALUE PROPOSITION:** We leverage data and expertise to provide labor market intelligence and analytics to our customers to help make business and career decisions. We provide easy access to services and a quality customer experience.
- TAG LINE:** We Help Northern Virginia Work.
- CUSTOMERS:** Our primary external customers are business and industry and job seekers (emerging, transitional, and incumbent)
- ROLE:** The Virginia Career Works – Northern Region Board will play several roles in furtherance of our vision and mission:
- We seek to catalyze change in the community to build effective partnerships.
 - We act as a convener of business and industry.
 - We will act as an intermediary/broker between key stakeholders to ensure mutually beneficial relationships and outcomes.
 - We will strategically invest in program innovation.

ORGANIZATIONAL CORE VALUES

Our Common Values:

We believe in the following shared principles, beliefs and priorities...

INNOVATION. We embrace on-going innovation, creativity, and change for achieving continuous improvement and growth.

INTEGRITY. We live our values every minute of every day. We believe in doing the right thing right the first time for our customers and always honoring our commitments.

STEWARDSHIP. We are stewards of the public trust and take seriously our responsibility for fiscal management of the public tax dollars.

LEARNING. We know learning and growth matters for our community, for our employees, and for our organization.

RESULTS. We are focused on results as essential to our success. Results are obtained by focusing on customer expectations, by providing a return on investment, and by ensuring future growth.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Virginia Career Works – Northern Region

January 2021 Through December 2024

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: January 2021 thru December 2024

- Build sustainable partnerships with businesses in the VCW Northern’s targeted industries.
- Create a more deliberate system to align business demand to the talent supply.
- Create more robust and comprehensive advertising channels to expand the VCW Northern’s reach.

STRATEGIC GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives support VCW Northern in accomplishing the priorities set for the next three years.

Strategic Goal 1: Be the regional go-to organization on workforce development as both a ‘thought leader’ and in the delivery of high-quality workforce services.

Key Objectives: Focus for 2021-2024

- 1.1.1. Identify key advertising channels to promote and advertise the workforce system as a bridge between business, people looking for jobs, training, and jobs.
- 1.1.2 Develop a simplified message for the advertising for two key audiences, businesses, and jobseekers.

Continued from 2020:

- 1.1 Provide leadership on workforce issues within Northern Virginia and the broader Capital Region by designing and executing innovative pilots; developing a formal targeted industry sector approach based on best practices in the field; and creating and executing a strategy to serve small businesses.
- 1.2 Transition Business Solutions from an industry partnership model to viable sector strategies model to meet broad talent needs of key industries.
- 1.3 Continue to design, pilot and scale innovative workforce development solutions in collaboration with employers and SkillSource America Job Centers.
- 1.4 Develop strategies that support the creation, growth and sustainability of local small businesses.
- 1.5 Pursue opportunities to be recognized and to win awards within the profession and/or for customer excellence and quality.
- 1.6 Enhance the VCW Northern’s brand through expanded presence on social media and other methods. Continue to ensure a transparent, accessible workforce system.

Strategic Goal 2: Expand and improve the talent pipeline of youth and adults for business.

Key Objectives: Focus for 2021-2024

- 2.1.2 Work with training programs to ensure that placement is the focus at the end of every training program through partnerships with Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.
- 2.1.2 Map career pathways in high demand occupations within the targeted industries to help jobseekers know the steps they need to take to become employed.
- 2.2.3 Develop and provide navigation tools that will help jobseekers choose appropriate certificates and training.

Continued from 2020:

- 2.1 Strengthen workforce development strategies for adults that link education and career pathways¹ to increased targeted sector employment opportunities to ensure that workers have the skills needed to fill current and emerging high wage/high demand jobs.
- 2.2 Strengthen workforce development strategies for youth that ensure access to education and training opportunities, particularly youth facing barriers to employment.
- 2.3 Establish strong linkages with post-secondary institutions to align programming with career pathways and labor market demand.
- 2.4 Promote registered apprenticeship programs.
- 2.5 Build a highly efficient job placement infrastructure through alignment of local public and private services.
- 2.6 Customize the service delivery processes to meet the needs of diverse populations, such as dislocated workers, older workers, veterans, low skilled adults, youth and adults with disabilities, offenders, etc.

Strategic Goal 3: Continue to focus on quality and diversify funding to ensure a sustainable impact over the long term.

Key Objectives:

Continued from 2020:

- 3.1 Continue to diversify funding in support of a strong public and private workforce development infrastructure.
- 3.2 Explore the feasibility creating a social enterprise by investing in start-up businesses as a way to generate funding and as a job creation strategy.
- 3.3 Maintain and increase capacity to attract non-WIOA formula funding resources.
- 3.4 Continue commitment to quality standards and a certification process.
- 3.5 Continue to produce return on investment Return on Investment (ROI) study annually.

New for 2021-2024: Strategic Goal 4: Build sustainable partnerships with businesses in the VCW Northern’s targeted industries.

Key Objectives:

- 4.1 Develop partnerships with industry and trade associations in targeted industries.
- 4.2 Learn and distribute information about the skill requirements of current job openings in ‘real time’ and the skill sets of those currently unemployed.
- 4.3 Through partnerships in 4.1, learn what jobs are hard to fill and recruit and train jobseekers to fill them.
- 4.4 Upskill current workers as needed to help businesses fill higher level jobs.

VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS – NORTHERN REGION MAP



¹ Career pathways are defined in WIOA as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that align with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved (as well as other criteria). As part of the business plan that will be developed, VCW Northern will facilitate a process to define what the career pathways are locally.

DATA SNAPSHOTS (Updated 2021)

The following data describes the area and is key to setting the context for the strategy contained in this revised plan. The Northern Region (LWIA 11) is comprised of the following jurisdictions: Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Fairfax City, Falls Church City, City of Manassas, and City of Manassas Park.

Population and Commuting Patterns

- The region's population is projected to increase over the next 10 years.

	LWIA XI	% Change	Virginia % Change	
2000	1,497,461		7,079,030	
2010	1,883,030	25.75 %	8,001,024	13.02 %
2020	2,198,314	16.74 %	8,744,273	9.29 %
2030	2,543,430	15.70 %	9,546,958	9.18 %
2040	2,846,376	11.91 %	10,201,530	6.86 %

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service).

COMMUTING PATTERNS



593,008
People who live
and work in the area



326,350
In-Commuters



347,549
Out-Commuters



-21,199
Net In-Commuters
(In-Commuters minus
Out-Commuters)

- Slightly More people commute out of the area to work than commute into the area.

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2014).

Employment and Education

- The top five industries with the most employees: Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services (198,717), Health Care and Social Assistance (98,061), Local Government (97,649), Retail Trade (95,937), and Accommodation and Food Services (81,375).

(Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 1st Quarter (January, February, March) 2020).

- The top average weekly wages: Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$5,011), Professional, Technical, and Scientific Services (\$2,528), Finance and Insurance (\$3,400), Information (\$3,198), and Wholesale Trade (\$2,366).

- The lowest average weekly wages: Accommodation and Food Services (\$497), Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (\$787), Retail Trade (\$735) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (\$690).

(Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 1st Quarter (January, February, March) 2020).

- The second quarter of 2020 saw significant impacts from COVID-19 nationwide and in northern Virginia. Job postings were down nearly 30% between Q1 and Q2 of this year, with Arlington and Alexandria experiencing the largest percent loss of job postings between the two quarters.
- The combined area of Fairfax County and Falls Church continued to have the largest number of employer job postings in the region, accounting for 56.7% of quarter two job postings. Job postings in cybersecurity and health care make up 19.1% of total job postings for the region, which was a greater share of postings than in Q1, but still a decline overall.
- The region remains the number one location for employers advertising positions in cybersecurity, with approximately 10.8% of all Q2 cybersecurity job postings nationwide coming from northern Virginia.
- The unemployment rate increased 6.4% between May 2019 and May 2020 due to impacts related to COVID19. However, the May unemployment rate was 1.5% lower than the unemployment rate for April.

(Source: Northern Virginia Community College, State of the Workforce, 2nd Quarter, 2020).



Top Certifications by Number of Job Postings

1	Security Clearance	21,140
2	Driver's License.....	5,978
3	CompTIA Security+.....	3,754
4	Project Management Certification (PMP).....	3,232
5	Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP).....	3,108
6	IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL)	2,634
7	Registered Nurse	2,425
8	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA).....	1,769
9	SANS/GIAC Certification	1,754
10	Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS).....	1,339
11	Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)	1,187
12	Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN).....	1,160
13	First Aid / CPR / AED	1,100
14	Certified Public Accountant (CPA).....	1,041
15	Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP).....	961

(Source: Northern Virginia Community College, State of the Workforce, 2nd Quarter, 2020).

- Of those 18 and older, 16% have graduated high school or have a GED, 18% have some college, 6% have an Associate's Degree, 28% have a Bachelor's Degree and 22% have a graduate or Professional Degree.

	LWIA XI	Virginia	United States
8th Grade or Less	63,199	275,329	12,639,425
Some High School	72,226	464,075	20,093,117
High School Grad/GED	244,413	1,633,105	68,044,371
Some College	268,862	1,457,887	57,431,237
Associate's Degree	87,840	440,219	18,586,866
Bachelor's Degree	419,995	1,258,661	42,027,629
Graduate or Professional Degree	331,557	862,686	24,008,551
	1,488,092	6,391,962	242,831,196

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015).