

Virginia Career Works Northern Region

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting (Virtual)

Summary Notes

Members Present Virtually:

Shekera Alvarado
Swati Aneja
Michael Becketts
Anthony Cancelosi
Joseph Carter
Julie Coons
Stacey Dessecker
Karen Drenkard
George Harben

Debora Harvey
Debby Hopkins
Daniel McGuire
Susan Mitchell
William Mountjoy
Susan Orehowsky
Steven Partridge
Rachel Payne
Leanne Rerko

Christopher Rieley
Roopal Saran
Daisy Saulls
Cindy Shao
Zuzana Steen
William Trumbull
LeAnn White

Executive Director: David Hunn

Staff: Sabrina Miller, Seema Jain, Haimanot Andualem, Virginia Judd, Deborah Dubin, Angela Harris, Suzanne Boudreaux, Robert Mahon, Sheila Jones, Jannette Sequeira, Claudia Barrios, Ghezal Kohestani, Rebecca Bennett, Karla Quiroz, Maria Nogales, Lauren Parker, Anna Briceno, Ahsan Ijaz, and Joseph Riccardelli

Observers: Lisa Tatum, Trang Montgomery, Tatiana Nuth, Andrew Everett, Greg Vaughn, Lindsay Washington, Robin Baker, Sandra Zacarias, Annie Tamerjan, Dorthea Brown, Rae Nguyen, Kimberly Carr, Daniel Mekibib

The meeting commenced at **8:29 a.m.**

Board Member Roll Call: Sabrina Miller conducted roll call, and a quorum was met.

Approval of December 5, 2024 Summary Notes: A motion was made by George Harben to approve the Board Summary notes from December 5, 2024 and was seconded by Karen Drenkard. The Summary notes were approved unanimously by the full Board of Directors, with no abstentions.

Chairman's Report:

Mr. William Trumbull, the Chairman of the Virginia Career Works - Northern Region Board of Directors, welcomed the Board to the meeting. Chairman Trumbull highlighted that this is the first virtual meeting in 2025.

Mr. Trumbull addressed the recent wave of massive and unauthorized federal employee and contractor layoffs in Washington, D.C., calling it one of the largest employer disruptions ever experienced in the region. Chairman Trumbull noted that VCW Northern staff are actively

coordinating with State Virginia Works officials and the Governor's Office to monitor the resulting increase in dislocated workers seeking assistance at American Job Centers. As of the meeting date, no new Rapid Response funding had been announced to support the increased demand.

Mr. Trumbull encouraged Board Members to share any observations on the layoffs and emphasized that the dislocation crisis would likely shape the Board's work for years to come. Chairman Trumbull also expressed concern about the pending March 14 Congressional vote on a Continuing Resolution, which will directly impact WIOA funding. He noted that Virginia is already facing a funding decrease due to its previously strong economy, and further reductions may be proposed in the President's FY 2026 Budget.

The Chairman informed the Board that media interest in the workforce impact has grown, with coverage by local news outlets and inquiries from The New York Times. He previewed agenda items including a review of the 2025–2027 WIOA Operational Plan (currently posted for public comment), the status of Center Certification applications for the region's five American Job Centers, and a staff presentation on the new Quarterly Employer Recognition Award. He thanked Board Member Dan McGuire for initiating the recognition award and noted that the first honoree is a Northern Virginia IT employer.

Lastly, Mr. Trumbull concluded by highlighting early performance metrics, reporting that VCW Northern had served over 25,847 customers through January 2025, with projections indicating more than 51,000 jobseekers could be served by June—figures expected to rise further due to the recent layoffs. The meeting proceeded with the printed agenda after an invitation for questions and comments from Board members.

Mr. Trumbull then asked for Committee Report Updates, as follows:

The SkillSource Group, Inc. (SSG) Board of Directors: George Harben reported for the SSG Board of Directors. Since the Virginia Career Works Northern Board meeting in December 2024, the SSG Board of Directors met and acted on the following items:

- Approved full-year FY 2025 funding for the Northern Virginia Senior Community Service Employment Program, from the National Council on Aging.
- Approved the public release of the *SkillSource* Group FY 2024 Return on Investment Report, conducted by Chmura Economics and Analytics. This Report highlighted that for every \$1 of public funds allocated to *SkillSource* Group, over \$3 of regional economic activity resulted from our workforce programs. This Report is available on the vcwnorthern.com website.
- Approved the public release of the *SkillSource* Group 2024 IRS Form 990, reflecting last year's financial activities. This Form 990 document is available on the vcwnorthern.com website.
- The *SkillSource* Group, Inc. and the Virginia Career Works Northern Region ended the PY WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker grant activity by exceeding the State's WIOA 40% Training Expenditure requirement. Our region reached 42%.

- Finally, at the February 2025 Board Meeting, we discussed the impact of the mid-February Federal funding freeze impact on our financial condition, noting the challenge to realize timely reimbursements from the State and Federal Government, should this funding freeze ever be undertaken again.

Youth Committee: Leanne Rerko reported for the Youth Committee.

- The Youth Committee last met on December 19, 2024.
- As of November 30, 2024, the Northern Virginia WIOA Youth Program was at 233 enrollments, with 8 In-School Youth enrollment. Over 80% youth are Basic Skills Deficient and nearly 60% have a disability. Northern Virginia is the second largest WIOA Youth Program in the State.
- The Committee was apprised of the data from the State WIOA performance report for the first quarter of PY 2024 – the program is meeting 4 of the 5 performance measures. The WIOA Youth Program is slightly behind on the Measurable Skills Gain performance measure but is expected to meet this measure by the end of the program year.
- Lastly, the Committee reviewed the PY 2023 obligations and expenditures – as of October 2024, the program has spent approximately \$1.2 million of the \$1.4 million in funds available and will utilize all funding by June 30, 2025. The Program is just starting to utilize some PY 2024 funding, that will expire on June 30, 2026

Quality Assurance: Robert Bartolotta reported for the Quality Assurance Committee.

- The Quality Assurance Committee last met on December 18, 2024.
- The Committee reviewed two (2) new Eligible Training Providers and their programs, and approved expanded course offerings for one (1) current Eligible Training Provider.
- The Committee also approved a curriculum change for one (1) ETP.
- As of November 30, 2024, 121 training vouchers had been issued and \$333,571 had been obligated in WIOA training funds.
- Staff apprised the Committee of a letter VCWN set to an Eligible Training Provider with a concern regarding the high cost of one of their courses. Staff also updated the Committee on the status of an appeal made to the State by an Eligible Training Provider removed by VCWN from the ETP State listing.

George Harben motioned for a resolution to support the Virginia Career Works – Northern Decision to remove the Eligible Training Provider from the Eligible Training Provider List; the motion was seconded by Joseph Carter. The motion was passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Necessary Board Actions Aligned with Approved 2025-2027 Strategic Priorities

Become a Thought Leader for Workforce Development

Review of Impact of Federal Worker and Contractor Layoffs

David Hunn shared a letter sent to Congressman Gerald Connolly by Chairman William Trumbull, with the support of the Virginia Career Works Northern Board of Directors Members sharing concerns of the impact of the Federal funding freeze. The Federal OMB freeze on grant funding through February 10, 2025 places our ability to retain staff and deliver services to jobseekers at great risk. This funding freeze is simply unsustainable beyond several days and will require difficult decisions to cut back or eliminate staff and programs very soon. The OMB-required funding freeze dramatically impacts our ability to serve Northern Virginia jobseekers and employers. The letter urged Congressman Connolly to share these eventual program impacts with his Congressional colleagues and Congressional Leadership as soon as possible.

Mr. Hunn then shared Virginia Career Works Northern website and the efforts put forth to support Federal dislocated workers.

Overview of 2025 – 2027 Northern Virginia WIOA Local Plan

Under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), each Local Workforce Development Board must submit a comprehensive four-year local plan to the Governor. This plan must align with the State’s vision and the Virginia Combined State Plan, focusing on strategic alignment rather than just regulatory compliance.

Seema Jain discussed how Virginia Career Works – Northern Region used its recent strategic plan to shape the 2025–2027 Local Plan. This resulted in a detailed operational roadmap to guide the effective use of workforce development resources in alignment with the Board’s goals.

Ms. Jain shared where the local Plan can be reviewed and is open to public comments until March 13, 2025. It has also been published in the Washington Post over several weeks. The plan will be submitted to the State Virginia Works office on March 14, 2025.

Build Sustainable Partnerships with Employers in Target Industries

Approval of 2025 Quarter 1 VCW Northern Employer Recognition Award

Robert Mahon discussed the selection of Enabled Intelligence, Inc. as the recipient of the inaugural Virginia Career Works (VCW) Northern Region Employer Recognition Award. This quarterly award was created to highlight employers who demonstrate outstanding commitment to workforce development and inclusion. Enabled Intelligence was recognized for its innovative approach to hiring and training neurodiverse individuals and people with disabilities, setting a regional example for inclusive talent strategies.

Enabled Intelligence, based in Falls Church, VA, provides secure and accurate data labeling services to support artificial intelligence development across a range of sectors, including national security, public health, transportation, and economic development. Robert noted that the company's inclusive hiring model and strategic workforce partnerships contributed significantly to its recognition. CEO Peter Kant's participation in the Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiative's Council for Economic Opportunity, in collaboration with Director Rebecca Moudry, led to a connection with Virginia Career Works Northern Region. This relationship expanded into a formal partnership involving WIOA funding and coordination with the Fairfax County Department of Family Services. The company also partnered with organizations such as Melwood and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to recruit and train candidates.

Their workforce model includes a multi-phase approach: candidate identification through community partners, a week-long Geospatial Data Labeling Bootcamp, and a 5-week paid internship. As their hiring needs evolved, Enabled Intelligence transitioned the bootcamp in-house while continuing to collaborate with regional partners. Since engaging with Talent Up Fairfax, the company will have hosted eight interns by March 10, 2025. Of the four who have completed internships, three transitioned into full-time roles. The most recent cohort includes seven contingent hires—one from Talent Up, three from DARS, two from WIOA, and one co-enrolled in both WIOA and Talent Up.

David Hunn and Robert Mahon emphasized that Enabled Intelligence serves as a model for employer-driven workforce development. Their ability to align funding streams, training programs, and inclusive hiring practices demonstrates how public-private partnerships can generate real, scalable workforce impact in Northern Virginia.

A motion to approve Enabled Intelligence for the 2025 Quarter 1 VCW Northern Employer Recognition Award, was made by Daniel McGuire and seconded by Susan Mitchell. The full board approved, with no abstentions.

Expand Talent Pipeline of Youth and Adults for Business

Update on Fairfax County Talent Up Initiative

Robert Mahon presented an update on the Talent Up Fairfax program, which continues to provide fully funded, work-based learning internships to support Fairfax County employers and jobseekers impacted by COVID-19. Over 300 employers have been engaged, and more than 1,000 jobseekers have applied, with 150+ paid internships available through Spring 2025. Talent Up has successfully placed candidates across high-demand fields including IT, healthcare, business, and marketing, with several internships converting to permanent positions.

Focus on Quality Services through Data Collection and Continuous Improvement

Assessment of 2025 – 2027 VCWN American Job Center Certifications

Seema Jain reported that all five Northern Virginia AJCs submitted certification applications, which were reviewed by the Virginia Career Works Northern Center Certification Team (CCT) through both in-person and virtual meetings. The CCT—comprised of Robert Bartolotta, George Harben, Daisy Saulls, Zuzana Steen, David Hunn, Seema Jain, and Sabrina Miller—recommended all five centers for certification. The applications have been forwarded to Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey McKay for review and signature, before final submission to the Virginia State Workforce Development Board for approval.

Northern Virginia One Stop Operator Update on Caseload and Service Strategy for FY 2025

Sandra Zacarias from the Fairfax County Department of Family Services, the One-Stop Operator for the Virginia Career Works Northern Region, gave a presentation reporting on the Training caseloads for FY 2025 during the period of July 2024 through January 2025.

Board Business Items

Executive Director Items

David Hunn provided updates on several key developments in Workforce Area #11, including training and OJT commitments and Talent Up Fairfax Success story videos. Additionally, Mr. Hunn also updated the board on the submission of The *SkillSource* Group’s annual IRS Form 990 submission which was completed in February 2025.

Adjournment

With all Board activities completed, Chairman William Trumbull sought a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made and seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.