

## **A SUMMARY WITH A FOCUS ON YOUTH OF THE UNIFIED STATE PLAN (2016) WEST VIRGINIA'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

### ***WHAT IS THE UNIFIED STATE PLAN?***

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system.

The publicly- funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of coordinated employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

In order for West Virginia to receive funding for workforce programs, West Virginia's Unified State Plan must provide the strategy and planning process that meets requirements and is approved by the US Department of Labor and the US Department of Education that covers the 6 core workforce programs:

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- and the Vocational Rehabilitation program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

### ***WHAT IS THE PROCESS AND PURPOSE OF REFORMING THE UNIFIED STATE PLAN?***

WIOA mandates that the Unified State Plan must outline its planning process and four-year strategy for the core programs to meet these goals:

- to foster better *alignment* of Federal investments in job training,
- to *integrate service delivery* across programs,
- to *improve efficiency* in service delivery, and
- to ensure that the workforce system is *job-driven* and matches employers with skilled individuals.

This mandate promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation requires robust relationships across programs, and coordination and partnerships across state, local, and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery.

## ***STRATEGY: ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS***

*What is WV's current economic environment, and its existing and emerging demand industry sectors and occupations?*

*Current occupations:* Many outside of our state erroneously believe that most West Virginians are employed in the coal-mining industry, but coal mining and other extraction occupations make up only a small part of the entire labor force. The most serious declines in West Virginia today are in Manufacturing and Mining (except oil and gas, which are projected to see modest employment growth as Marcellus shale exploration continues), and Chemical Manufacturing.

The largest employment groups currently are Office & Administrative Support (111,051) and Healthcare Practitioners & Support (78,662).

The service-providing sectors continue to expand in both West Virginia and the Nation as a whole, while goods-producing sectors comprise less and less of the total state economy. It is expected that goods-producing sectors will decline by 2,548 while the service-providing sectors will add 115,081 jobs by 2022.

*Current greatest demand in 2015, by job opening:*

1. Registered Nurses (2,000+)
2. Customer Services Representatives (1,954)
3. Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (1,871)
4. Heavy Truck Drivers (1,797)
5. Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (1,289) thanks to recent growth and technological advances in the Transportation industry.

*Regional variation in employment trends:*

Across the state, Workforce regions 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 are all seeing declines in the manufacturing sector and numerical loss in Mining. Coal mining has historically had high employment concentration—and now the largest job losses—in southern WV (Regions 1, southeastern WV, and 2, south-western WV). Regions 4 (north-western WV) and 5 (the northern panhandle) are seeing significant declines in Chemical Manufacturing.

Outside of healthcare, some industries in WV expect only minimal or modest growth. For example, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, and Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing are expected to see modest growth in Region 4. Wood Product Manufacturing is seeing modest growth in Region 4 and 7.

Region 3 (Kanawha County) follows the state patterns except for management occupations, which have a high concentration due to state government administration located in Charleston at the State's Capitol, and businesses and administrative headquarters located there.

In Region 5 (northern panhandle), Scientific and Technical Services and Administrative and Support Services are two industries projected to grow through 2022. Overall, the region has been historically heavy on concentration in manufacturing, which is experiencing declines. This downward trend for manufacturing is expected to continue, with the heaviest job losses falling in the Primary Metal, Petroleum and Coal Products, and Chemical manufacturing areas. Coal Mining is expected to encounter the most job losses through 2022.

Region 6 (north-central WV), although seeing declines in Primary Metal Manufacturing and Utilities, in terms of absolute numbers, has the highest employment of any region in the state. The strongest job growth for healthcare occupations throughout the state can be found in this region. It also houses the highest concentration of jobs in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and Educational Services. Region 6 has also been the primary beneficiary of natural gas development in recent years as the region is geographically situated atop the Marcellus Shale field.

Region 7 (eastern panhandle) is expecting modest growth in State Government; Construction of Buildings; Health and Personal Care Stores; and Federal Government, Excluding Post Office. Region 7 is expecting its sharpest declines in Credit Remediation and Related Activities; Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods; and Mining (except oil and gas).

*Planning for future demand:* Between 2013 and 2015, Office & Administrative Support, Transportation & Material Moving, and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical were the occupation groups with the highest demand. However, if adding Healthcare Support, total job openings for both Healthcare groups jumps up to 7,587 in 2015, making Healthcare occupations the hottest demand occupation group in West Virginia currently. West Virginia's aging population solidifies the need for more health care workers.

Over the next ten years, this trend will continue, with the healthcare and support services industry anticipated to grow rapidly, with a huge demand throughout West Virginia. Six out of 10 of the highest demand occupations in WV are healthcare-related, such as Personal Care Aides, Registered Nurses, Home Health Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, Nursing Assistants, and Medical Assistants, with more than 1,200 opening jobs every year. Also, the growth rate for several occupations in the healthcare sector is projected to grow by more than three percent every year.

*Need for education and higher-skill workers:* With the intensive growth of Healthcare and Social Assistance industries through 2022, the need for education and higher-skill workers is anticipated. For a nurse, therapist, or physician assistant, *knowledge of medicine* is a must. *Fluent English* is necessary to understand medical terminology and communicate with patients and medical staff. *Customer and Personal Services knowledge* is also important for Registered Nurses and LPNs and Physical Therapists because of the close relationships formed between nurse and patient. *Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Programming Skills* are essential, for example, for people working in the computer science field.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE STATE'S ECONOMY**

*Low workforce participation:* The average labor force participation rate (LFPR) in West Virginia has historically been lower than the nation as a whole for several decades and has been declining since 2008, mirroring the national trend. While it is anticipated that the overall LFPR for the U.S. will decrease, it is likely that the West Virginia LFPR will experience a steeper decline due to the State's relative age demographics: as of 2014, West Virginia ranks as the second-oldest state in the nation, with a median age of 42, compared to 38 for the U.S.

*Aging population and a workforce with poor health indicators:* West Virginia's 65 years and older population is expected to expand from 16 percent of the State's population to 22.9 percent by 2030. Another driver of the demand for healthcare is the relative health of the State's citizenry. Overall, in 2015 West Virginia ranked 47th in the nation on health and well-being, with significant challenges in regard to Smoking (50th), Diabetes (50th), Drug Deaths (50th), Heart Disease (50th), Immunization (50th), Obesity (49th), and Cancer Deaths (48th).

*High youth unemployment:* The estimated unemployment rate for West Virginians age 16-19 is 19.1 percent, the highest rate among all age groups. Many teenagers have difficulty finding employment because of lack of experience, and because some employers are unable or unwilling to hire teens due to strict labor laws and the inconvenience of scheduling around school functions and extracurricular activities.

Unemployment rates for young adults as well as older youth remain substantially higher than those for the population as a whole. Unemployment among young adults 20-24 in West Virginia is also higher than that of the average population, with only an estimated 58.4 percent employed of 66.9 percent in the labor force, for a 12.6 percent unemployment rate of those participating in the workforce.

*Long-term youth unemployment:* Long term unemployment is a concern for West Virginia's workforce, including among young workers who might otherwise be at the beginning of long working lives. From 2014 to 2015, both the number of adults 20-24 and ages 25-44 who exhausted their unemployment benefits increased, from 97 to 227 for 19-24-year olds, 931 to 1,652 for 25-44 year olds.

*Low levels of education and high unemployment:* The estimated number of the state population who did not graduate from high school is 111,289, with 37.4 percent in the labor force and 32.5 percent employed. This group exhibits the lowest amount of employment among the categories of educational attainment, reinforcing the fact that jobseekers without at least a high school diploma experience greater difficulty in attaining employment than their counterparts. The likelihood of employment correlates with education level, rates of employment, and labor market participation for individuals with secondary credentials or less are substantially lower than for those with postsecondary credentials.

In 2014, the number of unemployed with no more than a high school education who exhausted their benefits stood at 1,042, while the number of those with an Associate Degree was 66, the number with a Bachelor's Degree was 150, and the number with a Doctorate Degree was 12. In 2015, these figures changed to High School Graduate at 1,794, Associate Degree at 124, Bachelor's Degree at 299, and Doctorate Degree at 37, reinforcing the fact that despite a troubled economy, the more education one has, the more likely one is to find employment.

*High unemployment among individuals with a disability:* Unemployment is also high among individuals with a disability. Of West Virginia's civilian non-institutionalized population with some sort of disability, only 18.3 percent are employed.

*High, long-term unemployment among women:* The breakdown of the labor force 20 to 64 years of age shows that 66.2 percent of males and 58.6 percent of females are employed. In 2014, 807 females exhausted their unemployment benefits. This number jumped to 1,324 in 2015.

*Race and unemployment:* Over 94% of West Virginia's population 16 years and older is white. The estimated racial breakout of the West Virginia labor force is as follows: 53.3 percent of the White population is in the labor force and 49.7 percent is employed; 51.5 percent of the Black or African American population in the state is in the labor force, and 46.6 percent is employed; 63.8 percent of the Asian population in the state is in the labor force, and 59.2 percent is employed. In additional categories, 48.9 percent of those of two or more races are in the labor force, with 43.1 percent employed; Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) reported 56.5 percent in the labor force, with 49.6 percent employed; and White only, not Hispanic or Latino, has 53.3 percent of their population in the labor force, with an estimated 49.7 percent employed.

In 2014, the number of unemployed who exhausted their unemployment benefits can be broken into the following: Hispanic 22, Asian 7, African American 98, and White 1,713. In 2015, this expanded to Hispanic 37, Asian 13, African American 202, and White 2,998.

*Decreasing population overall and significant regional population shifts:* West Virginia's overall population is expected to decline by 0.5 percent from 2015 to 2020. Regionally, it is anticipated that significant population decreases will occur primarily in the south- west (Boone, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Wayne, Wyoming), central West Virginia (Fayette, Clay, Roane, Ritchie), and the northern panhandle (Brooke, Hancock, Wetzel), while both the north- central region (Monongalia) and eastern panhandle (Berkeley, Hampshire, Jefferson) are expected to experience substantial growth and therefore the greatest employment gains.

*Turnover:* In West Virginia, industry sectors with the highest average turnover rates include Accommodation and Food Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management. Sectors with the lowest turnover rates include Utilities, Educational Services, and Government. High turnover rates in industry sectors can indicate a number of possibilities, including, but not limited to, seasonality, short business cycles, part-time employment status, employee dissatisfaction, and health risks.

Turnover in WV is slightly higher among males than females; among non-whites; and turnover rates were highest among those age 14-24. Also, higher levels of education corresponded with lower levels of job turnover, with the average turnover rate for those with less than a High School diploma at 9.4 percent compared to 7.1 percent for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher. From a regional perspective, overall employment turnover ranged from 9.3 percent in Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Region 1, to 7.8 percent in Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Region 5.

*Education:* Compared with the United States, West Virginia has a lower proportion of jobs requiring Bachelor's degrees, and a larger proportion of jobs requiring post-secondary vocational education. Over the coming decade, however, it is expected that West Virginia's job market will trend toward jobs that require more postsecondary education, and the demand for jobs necessitating any postsecondary education will be greater than jobs that do not. Currently West Virginia ranks last in percent of population age 25 years or older with a Bachelor's degree or higher. Higher levels of education also correlate to higher levels of earnings and decreases in poverty status.

Although some occupations require additional on- the-job-training, in general, it is expected that jobs requiring this additional training will comprise a slightly smaller share of the total employment by 2022. It is notable that jobs requiring no additional training are anticipated to make up a larger share of the employment.

*Youth incarceration:* Governor Tomblin spearheaded the West Virginia Intergovernmental Task Force on Juvenile Justice that in 2014 conducted a comprehensive, data-driven study of the state's juvenile justice system. The analysis showed that the vast majority of youth removed from their homes and placed in state facilities are lower-level offenders with "status" offenses -- behavior that would not even be considered a crime if committed by adults. Not only is this costly, but also has the potential to undermine these youths' ability to become future workers and productive members of society. Many of the task force's recommendations were enacted into law in early 2015. The Offender Reentry initiative is one way to address prisoners' issues in order to help their success after their release.

### ***THE BIGGEST GAPS IN SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN WEST VIRGINIA'S WORKFORCE:***

Like knowledge, skills can be learned and developed with experience. More than that, through study, a skill represents a person's ability to develop knowledge, enhancing his or her capacity to perform the work. Each occupation requires different skills with different levels of importance.

*Skill Gaps:* Literacy and communication skills comprise four out of the top five skills needed in all regions of WV, mostly in healthcare support occupations. *Active listening* is, by far, the highest demand skill across all regions, followed by other communication skills: *social perceptiveness*, *speaking*, *service orientation* and *reading comprehension*, except in Region 6, where *critical thinking* is a higher need than reading comprehension. The state's workforce will require more than 66,000 additional employees to develop *Social Perceptiveness*, *Speaking*, and *Service Orientation* skills alone, just to meet anticipated need for those particular skills.

Notably, *Reading Comprehension* is an issue for many West Virginians in the workforce. This skill refers to the person's ability to read and understand information presented in written form. Good readers interact with text, making and validating predictions, and connecting the text events to their knowledge and experiences. Generally, this skill, together with *Critical Thinking and Writing*, are skills acquired during K-12 education. Reading Comprehension is the greatest demand gap among ages 16 to 19, who also have the highest rate of unemployment in WV.

*Knowledge Gaps:* Among West Virginia's workforce, the greatest gap in knowledge is *Customer and Personal Service*. More than 30,000 positions will be needed by 2022 that require competency with the principles and processes for providing customer and personal services; including customer needs assessment and evaluation of customer satisfaction. *English*, surprisingly, is the second-highest knowledge gap requirement. *Medical knowledge* is needed for the growing healthcare sector.

By 2022, West Virginia employers will need more than 30,000 employees who have the ability to comprehend and express information orally. Additionally, people with *Problem Sensitivity* will also be in high demand (27,885 in total). Aside from communication abilities, people with *visual acuity* will be in demand (20,362 employees).

It will also be very important for the vast majority of the State's workforce to continuously upgrade, expand, and improve their existing job skills to remain competitive as technology becomes even more entrenched in the workplace environment over the coming years.

## **HOW WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED, COORDINATED, AND ANALYZED IN WV:**

**Comprehensive Overall Planning:** West Virginia's comprehensive approach to improving its workforce development and training efforts is being driven at the highest level by the *Governor's Workforce Planning Council*, a cabinet-level group chaired by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin.

**Administration and Oversight:** *WorkForce West Virginia* is the state agency responsible for the administration and oversight of all of the WIOA programs under Title I and III. The *West Virginia Department of Education & the Arts, through its Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)*, is the state agency responsible for the administration and oversight of WIOA programs under Title IV. Title II Adult Education is administered under *West Virginia Department of Education (DOE)*.

**Coordination and Assessment by the State Workforce Development Board:** All agencies work closely with the state workforce development board, referred to in West Virginia as the *State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)*. The SWDB advises the Governor on workforce priorities and initiatives while also overseeing workforce activities managed regionally by Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). A few of the many responsibilities the SWDB is charged with include: developing opportunities for West Virginians to gain employment and earn competitive wages; developing and implementing workforce solutions based on the input of representatives and local workforce development boards around the state; and addressing West Virginia's workforce needs through efficient workforce training and development programs. The SWDB also works with DOE and DRS in developing and implementing the federally mandated state plan under WIOA. The Board shall also assist and encourage West Virginia's educational institutions and public assistance systems to improve their ability to prepare people for gainful employment. The Governor appoints the members of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and designates one of the business representatives to serve as the Chairperson.

The State Workforce Development Board is structured to satisfy both federal and state requirements maintaining a majority of business representation and additional needs set forth by State legislation. The State Board will develop an assessment that will be used every 2 years. The state will assign a committee to develop and design an evaluation system to be used by all core programs at the state and local level. The evaluation system will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

**Tracking System for Training Outcomes:** The State Workforce Development Board will work with regionally organized Local Boards and other state plan partners to determine the extent to which persons receiving training and education services aligned with regional industry needs are actually obtaining employment in occupations and sectors directly related to their programs of study. Developing the capacity for tracking employment related to training and education programs of study will require the study and development of an operational plan for collecting the relevant information. The State Board will work with the three core partners and all mandatory partners to build this capacity.

**Workforce Development Coordination Tool:** The *Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT)* was established under the state Workforce Investment Act to ensure coordination between the agencies engaged in workforce development activities, the local workforce Development Boards (WDBs), and WorkForce West Virginia. The ICT continues to operate as a state interagency source for addressing issues or concerns related to building and maintaining the most effective and efficient implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the overall workforce development system in West Virginia. The team's focus is on how best to collaborate between and among the state agencies directly involved in workforce development activities. ICT serves as a forum for the WDBs to seek information or recommendations to fulfill their

responsibilities. Workforce West Virginia convenes the team at least monthly to provide administrative and other services.

**Education Analysis Tools:** The *Governor's Workforce Policy Work Group* developed a gap analysis tool to analyze the educational certificate and degree program graduate numbers (supply) aligned with the statewide labor market workforce projections (demand) by pathway, with guidance from the National Governors Association.

**Economic Analysis Tools:** The State of West Virginia will use data collected by Workforce West Virginia's Research & Analysis Division, regional labor surveys, and other sources to analyze the current economic conditions and evaluate the workforce development environment for West Virginia employers.

**Regional Workforce Needs Analysis Tool:** Through the West Virginia Sector Strategy Project, Governor Tomblin's administration is implementing a statewide business sector evaluation and development of a comprehensive strategy to address the regional workforce skill needs for the state's economy. This involves a number of planning meetings with local businesses, community and technical colleges, public education and employers so training and workforce preparedness programs will establish and implement workforce-business sector strategies in West Virginia through a regional system that will address the current and emerging skills gaps in the economy. The State of West Virginia also plans to design and conduct business surveys in order to gather information on business needs. West Virginia aims to make the statewide business survey a regular exercise in order to ensure that service and workforce training is relevant and responsive to the needs of the business community.

**One-Stop Shops for Jobseekers are also Source of Coordination of Referral Information for Agencies:** America's Job Centers are available to meet the needs specific to individuals living in each region of WV, as part of WV's seven local workforce investment areas: Beckley (11-county region), Huntington (7-county region), Charleston (1-county), Parkersburg (9 county region), Wheeling (6 county-region), Fairmont (13-county region), and Moorefield (8-county region).

All core programs are participating either by physical presence or part of a shared electronic referral system, so that customers entering the workforce development system through any of the core partners' services will be provided a common intake process that will allow all of the partners to access information and provide referrals through WorkForce West Virginia, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, and/or Adult Education Services. Required partners participating include:

- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Second Chance Act
- Jobs for Veterans Grant (LVER/DVOP)
- Job Corp
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National Farmworker Jobs Program
- Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Unemployment Compensation
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Career and Technical Education (Perkins)
- Indian & Native American Programs
- Youthbuild

**Workforce Development/ Service Delivery Coordination/Reporting Tool:** *West Virginia's Mid Atlantic Career Consortium* (MACC) system provides a powerful tool to assist the workforce development system with the coordination of service delivery. The MACC is an integrated case management, referral, and federal reporting system that supports WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, TAA, NEG, and Rapid Response programs. The MACC's capacity to support integrated case management, data sharing, and reporting, allows case managers to see the full range of services participants have received from any covered program.



## SERVICES FOR YOUTH: IN-SCHOOL VS. OUT-OF-SCHOOL

**New Service Provision Expectations:** With the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), special emphasis has been placed on services to youth, defined as individuals aged 24 years or younger. The WIOA core partners, comprised of WorkForce West Virginia, Adult Education, and the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS) have long served this population. However, the new legislation requires a substantial re-allocation of funds to meet the new service provision expectations:

- Workforce is now required to use 75 percent of its local area youth funds to be allocated to workforce investment activities for out-of-school youth and 20 percent of its local area youth funds to be allocated for work experiences.
- West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services is now required to reserve at least 15 percent of its budget for the provision of pre-employment transition services (PETS) to students with disabilities while they are in high school.

**Which Core Partners Serve In-School vs. Out-of-School Youth?** With these requirements in mind, it can be said that the youth to be served fall into two separate groups, in-school and out-of-school, and that these two groups are served primarily by different WIOA core partners, though any individual served by the Workforce Development System (WDS) might be served by all three WIOA core partners, perhaps simultaneously.

Out-of-school youth are primarily served by WorkForce West Virginia and Adult Education; in-school youth are primarily served by the State's education system (a non-WIOA partner) and West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, for those eligible students with disabilities. Adult Education is prohibited from providing direct services to in-school youth.

**In-School Youth:** Primary responsibility for services to in-school youth falls, in a general sense, to West Virginia's education system. Among the WIOA core partners, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services plays the largest role in the development of in-school youth, albeit only for students with disabilities. Students seeking employment who do not qualify for vocational rehabilitation (e.g., not disabled, does not meet Order of Selection requirements) are referred from West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services to WorkForce West Virginia as needed. WorkForce West Virginia distributes funding to each of the State's local Workforce Development Boards, which are allowed to spend up to 25 percent of their youth funds on workforce investment activities for in-school youth.

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services has had a long standing partnership with West Virginia's education system, at both the State and local level, including cooperative agreements with the State Education Agency and each of the 55 Local Education Agencies in West Virginia. These cooperative agreements assure that each student with a disability in the state who needs special education, vocational education, and/or vocational rehabilitation services is identified and that the appropriate services are made available to the individual.

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services offices are located in some of the state's largest schools. Counselors visit every high school in the state to initiate rehabilitation services needed for transition from school to work. This allows the counselor to develop a collaborative relationship and assist the student in identifying goals, services, and service providers related to employment options prior to transition. A greater emphasis is now being placed for counselors to do outreach with these students and their parents/guardians during their sophomore year in order to maximize the counseling opportunities.

**PETS:** Since the enactment of WIOA, the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has begun to focus on providing services, particularly pre-employment transition services (*PETS*) to high school students with disabilities starting in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally, the new federal act emphasizes creating employer engagement within the community by creating work-based learning experiences for individuals, thus allowing employers to be matched with skilled workers. DRS has recently restructured its field services unit, creating a subdivision of counselors that focus solely on providing services, including *PETS*, to students with disabilities.

*PETS* rehabilitation counselors are also invited to participate in IEP meetings, during which s/he can determine the student's eligibility and describe DRS services, policies, and procedures as appropriate. Prior to or shortly after the student's IEP transition meeting occurs, Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development begins so both the student and counselor have an idea of what rehabilitation services will be necessary to meet the student's vocational goal. IPE development and approval for students with disabilities, including those able to be served if West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services is on an order of selection, will begin as early as appropriate during the transition process, but before the student determined to be eligible leaves the school setting.

The 2015 West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) indicated that *job exploration counseling* was the most frequently reported pre-employment transition service (*PETS*) need.

**POWER:** In 2015, WV DRS debuted *POWER* (Positive Outcomes within Education and Rehabilitation), a job shadowing program that offers transitioning students, who may be having a difficult time choosing a career path, the opportunity to experience an occupation by spending time with a professional working in the students' vocational goal/career field of interest, including STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), prior to committing to training.

In addition, the Student Transition to Employment Program (*STEP*) will also include the use of science and math teachers to provide appropriate students with further career exploration opportunities in STEM fields. These teachers may also provide college preparation activities, such as ACT test preparation, and work-based experiences.

By engaging high school students earlier and providing them with activities such as *PETS*, *STEP*, and *POWER*, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services expects recipient students will have a better understanding of the labor market and the value of obtaining a postsecondary credential. Students with disabilities that are eligible for VR services may, in accordance with their IPE, receive assistance from West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services in obtaining postsecondary training.

In 2016, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services will partner with Community Access, Incorporated to implement a program to support the design and implementation of programming and outreach while addressing the new direction mandated by WIOA. Specifically, the program will address the five mandated *PETS* for high school students with disabilities. The project will assist school districts by offering training and technical assistance in setting up community-based work experience programs for students with disabilities. The project will help level the playing field between resource-rich metropolitan areas and underserved rural settings. In addition, a strong statewide outreach campaign to teachers, parents, students, and other VR stakeholders will include historically under-served groups including students in the foster care system, those returning from out-of-state placements, and those students on the Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) track. The project has the following goals:

1. To assist school districts in setting up community-based Work Exploration programs.
2. To develop statewide parent training network utilizing the Parent Educator Resource Centers.
3. To develop a network of transition specialists to work with West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, WorkForce West Virginia, and WVDOE staff.
4. To develop a statewide cross-sector outreach program with a strong emphasis on traditionally underserved populations.
5. To establish and strengthen partnerships between government and private stakeholders to better identify eligible students and develop strategies for enrollment and service provision.

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services also assists WVDOE with Graduation 20/20, a West Virginia initiative that uses a data driven intervention framework developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) to address issues that have negatively impacted school completion. Graduation 20/20 utilizes the innovation configuration on evidence-based transition practices and predictors of post school success to guide professional learning which was published by the Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center. The program, using tools from NDPC-SD and CEEDAR, trains local school-based teams and team leaders to diagnose the causes of dropout and develop site-specific improvement plans and strategies.

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services is currently facing vacant positions and increased retirements, which understandably put a strain on organizational capacity. During this time, some individual consumers may be placed on waitlists or referred to WorkForce WV or Adult Education as appropriate, until DRS gains the resources to serve additional individuals.

***Out-of-School Youth:*** All of the WIOA core partners are able to serve out-of-school youth who qualify for services. Adult Education works exclusively with out-of-school populations, many of whom are ages 24 and under. The core partners work, in tandem, on many workforce development activities. The partners all have memorandums of understanding at the state and regional levels and also collaborate on specific projects at local levels. For example, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services and Adult Education are collaborating with a university to assist adult education students in transitioning to post-secondary education through a curriculum that teaches time management, a basic math refresher, and any other identified needs for individuals with disabilities returning to post-secondary education. West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, WorkForce West Virginia, and Adult Education also collaborate in workforce development region 2 as part of WIOA One-Stop Management Partner meetings with local development groups to better identify and facilitate needed services for the local area.

The funds are used to carry out programs that provide a range of services, from tutoring and evidence-based dropout prevention strategies that lead to completion of a secondary school diploma to alternative secondary school services; paid and unpaid work experiences; pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, and job shadowing; leadership development opportunities and follow-up services after the completion of participation; comprehensive guidance and counseling; financial literacy education; entrepreneurial skills training; services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; and activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services consumers who were served as students with disabilities receive continued VR services under the guidance of a West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services “Transition” counselor, upon graduation from high school; frequently, these continued services include higher education.

For youth with disabilities who do not graduate from high school, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services will also work closely with Adult Ed, referring consumers as needed, to ensure that these individuals have an adequate opportunity to obtain a completed high school level education. West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services will also provide assistance as needed to VR consumers in Adult Education programs to ensure that these consumers have the means to progress through and complete these programs if doing so requires the circumnavigation of functional limitations based on the consumers' disabilities.

West Virginia's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners at all locations. Beginning in July 2015 under WIOA, adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training, unifying and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and high school credential programs.

*1. FastTrack Programs – Increasing Transitions.* Funded providers will use key elements of research based programs to offer FastTrack options including:

- Basic Skills FastTrack, with programs focused on English/Language Arts, Mathematics and Numeracy, Science, or Writing in Response to Text
- Career Cluster FastTrack, with programs focused on career immersion and career clusters, partnerships with Career and Technical Centers, and partnership efforts between community colleges and community-based organizations and local WDBs, and workplace projects that partner providers, employers and WDBs
- ESL FastTrack, using a flipped classroom model for ESL, FastTrack students acquire the skills needed to transition to basic skills education classes.

*2. Professional/Technical Transitions– Moving Students to Postsecondary Success in Professional/Technical Programs.* Some students can be served in Professional/Technical Transition programs that result in recognized certificates leading to progression along a defined educational and career pathway. It is the State's goal to make these programs available at every West Virginia community and technical college, and to encourage partnerships with local community based organizations and as part of the education services at state correctional facilities.

- Programs focused on career immersion and career clusters
- Partnerships with Career and Technical Centers
- Partnership efforts between community colleges and community-based organizations and local WDBs
- Workplace projects that partner providers, employers and WDBs
- Flipped classroom models for ESL
- The State will coordinate with One-Stop partners to meet the needs of the non-English speaking customers.

*3. Developmental and Academic Transition Programs – Moving Students to Postsecondary Success in Academic Programs.* Developmental and Academic Transition programs will employ the same strategies as professional technical transition programs. They will apply these strategies to credit-bearing classes along 2-year degree pathways and ensure accelerated student progress through higher levels of adult education and precollege education and transition into 2-year degree programs.

*Expanding Options for High School Credentials – Certificates and Diplomas.* In light of changes to options for acquiring high school credentials made by the federal government and the growing importance of these certificates and high school diplomas, West Virginia has expanded the options available to adults. Our goal is to ensure that adult learners acquire the necessary credentials by gaining the knowledge and skills demanded in the workforce and required for postsecondary success. Toward that end, West Virginia will continue to award state certificates linked to the recognized high school equivalency state exam (TASC).

SPOKES: In 2003, an academic and job preparation skills program entitled SPOKES (Strategic Planning in Occupational Knowledge for Employment and Success) was created by WVABE under a contract between the WVDOE Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development and Department of Health and Human Resources, and in collaboration with some WDBs.

The SPOKES program model was also designed to provide intense daily activities that would address academic and soft skills necessary for adults to pursue gainful employment. This 4 to 10 week program allows WV WORKS participants to be referred to the program and receive services at the start of each work week. A variety of certificates may be earned by participants who complete the program. Individualized, computer-aided, small/whole group, and work- based/site instructional techniques are utilized within the program delivery of services.

## **PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

In West Virginia, our workforce development system begins with the secondary school system which includes career and technical schools through post-secondary education which include community colleges and the higher education system. All core programs work on a regular basis with all sectors of education—in particular, CTEs and CTCs.

The core partners understand the importance of having a recognized postsecondary degree from the perspectives of both employers and job seekers. The state has always strived for quality, career- based employment outcomes for its consumers, when appropriate. In this aim, the state has a long history of providing consumers with the necessary training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential. In FY 2015, over \$11 million in DRS funding, representing expenses, went toward training. Of this amount, the majority was for four-year college/university and junior/community college tuition. Core partners have a liaison with postsecondary institutions across the state including 44 colleges, universities, community and technical colleges. Furthermore, cross-training between agencies is routinely conducted at state meetings and conferences. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) is an example of an agency that cross-trains with the core partners. HEPC develops and oversees a public policy agenda for West Virginia’s four-year colleges and universities.

*Given the low level of formal education in the state, however, West Virginia will concentrate on training for “middle skill” occupations that require additional training or education beyond high school, but not a four-year college degree.* This graduated approach will target certifications, and 12 to 24 month programs in highly transferrable technical skills. This approach will allow the state to meet workers “where they are” in their skill sets and build on that base. The state will encourage Local Workforce Development Boards to engage in partnerships with local educational entities, businesses, community-based organizations, etc. in order to communicate the benefits of technical training and the development of robust and comprehensive career pathways models.

WorkForce West Virginia will work with Adult Education, Career Technical Education (CTEs), and Career and Technical College (CTCs) to develop and promote streamlined training courses for individuals who already possess some transferable skills. These streamlined programs will have multiple points of entry and lead to nationally recognized credentials in technical occupations and will allow job seekers to enter the workforce more quickly.

WorkForce West Virginia will promote technical training through our website and also through activities such as workshops, job fairs, rapid response activities, youth programs, social media, informational meetings, etc., to support efforts to better understand the connections between technology-based economic development and education and skills development for existing workers.

## **PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development strategies are primarily developed and implemented by the West Virginia Development Office. The Development Office works closely with WorkForce West Virginia, CTCs, CTEs, and Higher Education in evaluating labor market resources to present to current and potential business entities. West Virginia has local economic and community development offices throughout the state to work in local areas. The workforce system works closely with these local entities in an effort to promote economic development.

The Secretary of Commerce oversees the Development Office and is also a member of the State Workforce Development Board, ensuring that workforce development strategies align with economic development efforts. Additionally, the Secretary of Commerce, along with the Executive Director of WorkForce West Virginia serve on the Governor's Workforce Planning Council

## **WEST VIRGINIA'S STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS**

**Policy Framework for Program Alignment:** The state will emphasize “demand-driven skills-attainment” in the policies it sets pertaining to local and regional workforce plans.

- *Regional partnerships:* building partnerships between industry leaders, workforce professionals, education and training providers, and economic development leaders to develop workforce and education policies that support regional economic growth.
- *“Earn and learn”:* using training and education best practices that combine applied learning opportunities with material compensation while facilitating skills development in the context of actual labor market participation.
- *Supportive services:* providing ancillary services like childcare, transportation, and counseling to facilitate program completion by those enrolled in training and education courses.
- *Creating cross-system data capacity:* using diagnostic labor market data to assess where to invest, and also, the use performance data to assess the value of those investments.
- *Integrated service delivery:* braiding resources and coordinating services at the local level to meet client needs.

## STATE STRATEGY

### Goal 1: Workforce Development System Integration

Create a seamless one-stop delivery system.

*Strategy 1.1: Work with all partners to understand what a truly integrated workforce looks like.*

→ Create MOUs with all partners; treat One-Stops as access points for education and training; share goals locally and at the state level; integrate programs to achieve unified goals.)

*Strategy 1.2: Ensure cross-training of all workforce development staff.*

→ Develop a comprehensive on-line training program for all workforce development staff with certification; develop team-based case management for the customers at one-stops and a one-stop certification process; provide training for one-stop partners.

*Strategy 1.3: Maintain frequent communication with all partners within the workforce development system.*

→ Use communication routes, including the state's monthly Interagency Collaborative Team Meetings, the Workforce WV website: [www.workforcewv.org](http://www.workforcewv.org), the Workforce Council, monthly workforce development board of directors meetings, and quarterly state workforce development board meetings.

*Strategy 1.4: Develop common IT system to be used by core partners.*

→ The state will develop an IT system that will allow co-enrollment of individuals receiving services from the 3 core providers. WVWVDS will utilize its integrated data system. Technical training will be provided on the data-sharing IT system to all affected staff both at a regional and centralized location.

### Goal 2: Customer-Driven Approach (Individual & Employer)

*Strategy 2.1: Work with employers to identify true workforce needs.*

*Strategy 2.2: Access skill gaps and needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training.*

*Strategy 2.3: Ensure that individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, have increased access to and for opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services.*

### Goal 3: Career Pathways Development

→ It is imperative that the workforce development system provide education and training for skills that lead to quality employment in high-demand jobs or entry-level occupations that lead to high demand jobs. Career pathways must be diverse with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to pathways. The State will support career pathways that help adults and youth enter the labor

force and/or advance among multiple occupations, advance within an occupation or move to a new occupation that has similar skills to a previous occupation.

*Strategy 3.1: Ensure career pathways development as set forth in WIOA is followed.*

*Strategy 3.2: Enhance current career pathways system.*

*Strategy 3.3: Educate individuals (job-seekers and employers) and encourage career pathways in training and employment environments.*

#### **Goal 4: Increase Opportunities for Youth**

→ The workforce development system must recognize the employment challenges faced by youth, particularly those without postsecondary credentials. Partners must work together to alleviate barriers and create opportunities for our youth.

*Strategy 4.1: Implement new WIOA regulations regarding youth.*

*Strategy 4.2: Make youth services a priority within the workforce development system*

*Strategy 4.3: Offer youth a clear path from their current situation to success.*

#### **INITIATIVES TO MEET THE NEEDS:**

- *Governor's Workforce Planning Council's "My State, My Life" campaign*, which targets middle- and high-school students with a video to promote future employment opportunities and highlight post-secondary education programs to encourage WV youth to build the career of their dreams in West Virginia using community and technical colleges offerings and a website with an integrated, central resource center.
- *Simulated Workplace* is an innovative, new statewide educational initiative from the State Workforce Development Board and Career and Technical Colleges. It is restructuring the state's career-technical schools and implementing workplace and business learning protocols that align with general requirements and expectations of West Virginia's workplace. The education of the students is done in a business environment where the students manage the enterprise, review performance, collaborate on the objectives and develop work-ready skills and aptitudes (e.g., effective communications, etc.) All career-tech schools will have Simulated Workplace programs starting in fall 2016.
- In partnership with the West Virginia Department of Education, West Virginia Career and Technical Colleges and WorkForce West Virginia, more than 44,000 *Career Readiness Certificates* have been issued in West Virginia. Job seekers and students who take the assessments in West Virginia have access to free remedial online programs called *KeyTrain and Win* to improve their skill levels and achieve certification.



- The *Learn and Earn Program*, which operates through the Community & Technical College Chancellor's office, provides students opportunities for paid cooperative educational experiences in high-demand fields. The students work on-site 50% of their time and spend the other 50% in a classroom setting. Currently, there are cooperative opportunities for students at Toyota, Gestamp, DuPont, Kureha, NGK, Union Carbide (Dow), and others. The Chancellor's office actively seeks opportunities to expand this program.
- The state's Community & Technical College System also continues to implement programs to develop skilled workers in the Oil and Gas Education and Training Initiatives; Dislocated Coal Miner Training Initiative; National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) SPACES Grant; and Construction Management Certificate. West Virginia's community and technical colleges provide the customized training, skill enhancements, certificate, and associate degree programs.
- Re-designed *One Stop services* will include developing adult education and family literacy programs that ensure all adults have the basic education skills they need to contribute to their families and communities; providing employment, training, and retention services to individuals with barriers to employment; providing "wrap around" support services, such as child care, unemployment insurance, and transportation to enable eligible individuals to work or participate in employment and training activities; and providing technical assistance to local Boards and training providers to ensure the most effective delivery of workforce services.
- *Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials*: The state will use data and work with employers to identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment and will offer high quality training to individuals to obtain those skills. The state will also work closely with employers, Industry Partnerships and LWDBs to identify or develop the badges, micro- credentials, certifications and other credentials that adequately represent attainment of those skills.
- *Improving Accessibility through Financial Assistance for Training/Education*: The state will strive to connect youth and adults seeking postsecondary education with available financial aid to include Pell grant programs. The state will also encourage those students without a high school diploma or recognized equivalent deemed eligible under ability-to-benefit for financial assistance to enroll in eligible career pathway programs. Contextualized Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) programming will also be used as a mechanism for encouraging students without a high school diploma or recognized equivalent to enroll in eligible career pathway programs.
- *Professional Knowledge for Dislocated Workers*: There has also been significant collaboration between the state workforce development system and community colleges on the multiple Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants received. The TAACCCT I grants have been used to develop curriculum and customize programs to re-train dislocated workers in the Advanced Manufacturing, Energy Distribution, Production and Conservation, and Healthcare Technology industries. Career coaches at each college aided students by arranging for wrap-around supportive services, as necessary. Adult Education partners at some of the colleges, provided academic support for students prior to and during enrollment in classes. The state will analyze the results of each project and utilize best practices and lessons learned to help improve the broader workforce development system.
- *Title II Competitive Grant Process*: A one-year open competition process was conducted in spring 2016 by the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development. The ABE Application Packet will be available in March each year at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/abe/> with grant submissions due in April. Program applications will be considered for funding based on the following: the ability of the program to develop career pathways for students; the appropriate use of technology in the

program; that the program design is learner-centered with active student participation; the ability of the program to provide standards-based curricula. Preference is given to providers who can document their past effectiveness in improving the literacy skills of adults and families.

- **Statewide Business Survey:** West Virginia will use the increase in set-aside funding to conduct a statewide business survey, in conjunction with the state's workforce partners' agencies, to gather information on the needs of business in the state. West Virginia aims to make the statewide business survey a regular exercise in order to ensure that service and workforce training is relevant and responsive to the needs of the business community.
- **Developing a Workforce Readiness Certification:** Working with Governor Tomblin the Workforce Planning Council is exploring development of a workforce readiness certificate program that will be available to high school graduates (and adults) so they can obtain this new certification as a way to better prepare and position themselves for employment. Surveyed businesses indicated that if an applicant presented this credential, it could favorably impact the hiring decision.
- **Statewide system building through IT System Development:** As partnerships and data sharing develop in West Virginia, they will be followed by the development and improvement of IT systems, outreach through technology to areas without physical locations, enhancement of the mobile app so that case managers can use the app as a communication tool to provide employment guidance to their customers.
- **Expanding apprenticeship** is another statewide goal for West Virginia to expand and extend apprenticeship and internship opportunities for current students as well as older unemployed and underemployed individuals. The state will require the LWDBs to identify and reach out to the Registered Apprenticeship training program sponsors within their local areas. The State will verify with the Office of Apprenticeship the status of each sponsor.
- **Incarcerated youth:** West Virginia will also explore development of a program targeting those incarcerated youth serving their sentence in the state's juvenile correctional facilities. The goal would be to reduce juvenile recidivism.
- WorkForce West Virginia coordinates with *West Virginia Partnerships to Assure Student Success (WVPASS)*, a state initiative of national and state partners that support West Virginia communities by providing students and parents training, technical support and resources for youth and community development to students and parents at high schools and/or technical centers throughout the state.
- **Training Providers:** Staff will analyze the need and research for training providers. They would also provide and maintain the State's eligible training provider list. Continuous improvement to the process will allow for an efficient system to track future performance. The State will enhance the system to track results of participants by training type and provider, and also provide cross-matches to employment outcomes. This information will allow potential training participants to make informed decisions about the best type of training and the best training providers to choose based on the employment indicator of a good paying job.
- **Agricultural Outreach Plan Highlights:** As more family farms are sold and consolidated and farm-to-school and similar initiatives increase, One Stop staff have adapted to provide personal contact, translators, and materials in the language most familiar to migrant service farm workers in order to inform MSFWs about the core, intensive, training and career services available to them at no charge.