



***Re-E*mploying *V*irginians – *REV* it up!**

Economic Crisis Strike Force

Workforce Recovery Plan

By Dr. Megan Healy, Chief Workforce Advisor

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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 2020, Governor Northam declared a state of emergency due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), a communicable disease threatening the health and livelihood of Virginians. The Commonwealth's workforce has faced unprecedented unemployment and financial instability in the weeks that have followed despite a robust economy and strong labor force prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

Governor Northam's Economic Crisis Strike Force is designated in the Code of Virginia as a task force responsible for coordinating response efforts in times of major economic distress. The group mobilized quickly in March to develop strategies for supporting businesses, workers, and consumers during the public health crisis. The "Re-Employing Virginians" Workforce Recovery Plan is heavily informed by its work and lessons learned from the planning process. The plan was presented to the Governor's Policy team on May 18th, 2020 and to the Economic Crisis Strike Force group on June 3rd, 2020.

It should be noted that the economic and health impacts of COVID-19 have fallen disproportionately on many of the most vulnerable members of our society, specifically frontline healthcare workers, low-wage workers, women, and people of color. For this reason, the plan marries short-term recommendations with longer-term policy solutions to the challenges faced by these communities.

Virginians expect and deserve a coordinated response by state government to the unprecedented crisis facing the Commonwealth. Meaningful support for workers will require immediate tactical recommendations as well as an ambitious vision for the Commonwealth's future, both of which are outlined in the following plan.

II. PLAN OBJECTIVES

The “Re-Employing Virginians” Workforce Recovery Plan has been developed to ensure that the Commonwealth’s post-COVID-19 recovery efforts are responsive to the needs of workers now and in the future. Recommendations are organized by implementation time period: those that were implemented in the summer of 2020, those that were and are being implemented in fall of 2020, and finally those that will have long-term impacts if adopted. The plan’s objectives are as follows:

- Establish clear procedures for Virginia’s workforce system during the Governor’s Phase I & II reopening;
- Prepare for the potential of a COVID-19 resurgence in the fall of 2020 and prepare policy recommendations for the 2021 General Assembly;
- Lay the foundation for future resiliency through innovative workforce strategies.

While the tactics outlined in this report are diverse, all are united by the following core values:

- **Safety and Support:** Virginians must feel safe and supported in the post-COVID-19 recovery period, and this will require bold action on issues including unemployment benefits, occupational safety, and workforce supports. The Workforce Recovery Plan’s recommendations aim to direct time and resources towards these areas that matter most to workers. It is also critical that Virginians are provided with clear and timely information on any actions taken so they may make educated decisions for themselves and their families.
- **Diversity:** The Commonwealth is an incredibly diverse state, and this has resulted in a diversity of experiences of the COVID-19 crisis. While all Virginians have felt the effects, there are some – such as the disabled, low-wage workers, the Latinx population, and small businesses – that have been disproportionately impacted. An attention to equity is a core component of this Workforce Recovery Plan, and all strategies are aimed at overcoming the disparities that so clearly emerged during the pandemic.
- **Lessons learned:** Critical lessons learned have already begun to emerge from the Commonwealth’s experience responding to COVID-19. Through substantial research, data analytics, and stakeholder engagement, the Workforce Recovery Plan has incorporated these insights into its recommendations in order to ensure that history will not repeat itself and that Virginia’s workers, employers, workforce system, and economy are more resilient moving forward.

III. PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Workforce System Partners

In order to coordinate the Commonwealth's differentiated and siloed approach to workforce, Virginia's first cabinet-level Chief Workforce Advisor created a nexus for interagency and interdepartmental coordination based on workforce programs and funding sources. Previous to the emergency, this group met monthly. Group members also serve as content experts who support the Governor's Virginia Board of Workforce Development at their quarterly meetings.

The group is composed of senior representatives in Executive Branch agencies and departments that report to four secretariats. These agencies and departments include the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Department of the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), Department of Education (DoE), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Veterans Services (DVS), Department of Corrections (DoC), Department of Labor & Industry (DoLI), Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and the 15 local workforce development board directors who operate Virginia's Career Works Centers.

When the COVID-19 emergency was declared, the network expanded to include the following stakeholders: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD - Go Virginia), and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).

Finally, healthcare workforce recommendations were included because of their high priority during the crisis and because the industry is the fastest growing in the Commonwealth.

Plan Development Process

The Economic Crisis Strike Force organized its efforts around the key components of economic recovery. The Chief Workforce Advisor chaired the Workforce Recovery Plan development efforts.

The plan was developed in three stages over six weeks. It was presented to the Governor's Policy team on May 18th, 2020 and to the Economic Crisis Strike Force group on June 3rd, 2020. The plan has also been presented to the Virginia Board of Workforce Development.

First, those working on the plan conducted landscape surveys to include the thinking of a number of stakeholder groups. A qualitative view of recovery and where each stakeholder group was in their recovery planning was of interest.

Stakeholder groups surveyed included: Virginia's Congressional delegation, General Assembly members who serve on committees that consider legislation impacting workforce policy and funding, local government leaders, agency leadership, departments and initiatives that impact workforce, regional workforce development board directors, labor leaders, community college presidents, other nonprofit and private sector training providers, and members of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. Survey responses were analyzed and several facilitated work

sessions were held to develop uniform guidelines for office reopening and workforce service delivery, which can be found in Appendix I.

Analysis from national think tanks and associations was used as well as coordination and shared information from peers in other Governors' offices around the country.

Concurrent with the qualitative gathering of information and advice, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership developed data sets and analyzed assumptions before making the recommendations found in this plan. This research can be found in Appendix II.

Finally, the plan was developed and written by the Office of the Chief Workforce Advisor. For a complete list of those involved in the survey, data collection, and writing of this plan, refer to Appendix III.

IV. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summer 2020 – Reopening Recommendations

Objective: Establish clear procedures for Virginia’s workforce system during the Governor’s phased reopening

The following recommendations and those for fall of 2020 were presented to stakeholders in the summer of 2020 that included Governor Northam’s Policy team, the Economic Crisis Strike Force, and the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. Many have been implemented already.

Recommendation: Provide robust guidelines for worker safety to encourage Virginians to return safely to work.

Recommendation: Execute a communication plan to ensure that Virginians are informed of the changes to eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance that will coincide with the reopening of the Commonwealth.

Recommendation: Expand Unemployment Insurance protections and, wherever possible, exempt high-risk individuals from pre-COVID-19 eligibility requirements when they are reinstated.

Recommendation: Ensure that Virginia’s workforce system agency partners are aligned in their reopening strategies and prepare Virginia’s Career Works Centers launch of public-facing services in conjunction with the reinstatement of the Unemployment Insurance job search requirement.

Recommendation: Refocus the Virginia Board of Workforce Development’s (VBWD) advisory efforts on workforce recovery for the remainder of 2020.

Recommendation: Appeal to local government partners to preserve and potentially increase funding of their local career centers in order to handle the surge of Virginians that will require re-employment services.

Fall 2020 Recommendations

Objective: Prepare for the potential of a COVID-19 resurgence in the fall of 2020 and prepare policy recommendations for the 2021 General Assembly

Recommendation: In the event of a fall resurgence of COVID-19, ensure that Virginia’s workforce system is prepared to provide all essential services virtually.

Recommendation: Convene business and labor groups to encourage the development of new strategies around worker supports and workweek models that could prevent future job loss.

Recommendation: Ensure access to sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies by partnering with private industry in the Commonwealth to make masks, other personal protective equipment, and testing materials in Virginia.

Recommendation: Further streamline Rapid Response policies to prevent further layoffs and consider allocating additional state funds to pair with federal Rapid Response funds.

Recommendation: Virginia should consider the adoption of a Mini-Warn Act to ensure the Commonwealth has an accurate, real-time understanding of labor market conditions during a resurgence.

Recommendation: Ensure misclassification auditors at the Virginia Department of Taxation are prepared to begin their work protecting Virginia’s workers at the enactment date of January 1, 2021.

Recommendation: Research and develop policy ideas for the 2021 General Assembly based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency.

Long Term Recommendations

Objective: Lay the foundation for future resiliency through innovative workforce strategies.

Recommendation: Reaffirm the workforce system’s commitment to high-skilled, high-wage, stable employment for Virginians in order to enhance the economic resiliency of the Commonwealth. This can be accomplished by:

Deepening Virginia’s commitment to high-quality as well as in-demand jobs by developing a thoughtful methodology for the “Demand Occupations List;”

Developing a pathway to more stable employment for low-wage workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;

Continuing our investments in Virginia’s world-class post-secondary education system to prepare young adults and adult workers for success in the 21st-century economy.

Recommendation: Make strategic funding and infrastructure investments to enhance the ability of the Commonwealth’s workforce system to serve Virginians affected by COVID-19 by:

Designating a stable source of recurrent state funding to stand up and sustain essential administrative and technical infrastructure;

Consolidating administrative oversight and funding across the Virginia Career Works System;

Aligning workforce interventions to support a comprehensive set of bond-funded infrastructure investments;

Recommendation: Leverage technology to increase efficiency and improve workforce outcomes by:

Continuing investments in shared Information Technology infrastructure such as the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal and Dashboard;

Altering restrictions on inter-agency data sharing and requiring all relevant agencies to join the Workforce Data Trust.

Recommendation: Fund employee ownership to mitigate loss of middle-income jobs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

Recommendation: Continue the Governor’s efforts to ensure comprehensive deployment of broadband throughout the Commonwealth to allow equal opportunity for remote work, training, and education.

Recommendation: Achieve financial literacy for all Virginians, with a particular focus on the importance of emergency funds to financial stability.

V. SUMMER 2020 – REOPENING RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective: Establish clear procedures for Virginia’s workforce system during the Governor’s phased reopening

Recommendation: Provide robust guidelines for worker safety to encourage Virginians to return safely to work.

It is central to Virginia’s economic recovery that workers return to their workplaces once businesses reopen, and this is possible only if they feel safe in doing so. The following recommendations were informed by CDC guidelines, input from labor leaders, and by the guiding question, “Do these measures decrease the possibility of transmission?” They should serve as considerations to inform any general safety standards endorsed by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Workplace safety standards should provide guidance to employers for ensuring safe working conditions in the following areas:

- A. *Telework, staggered workstations, and staggered shifts*
- B. *Face coverings*
- C. *In-person work gatherings*
- D. *Cleaning and disinfecting*
- E. *Hand sanitizing stations*
- F. *Health screenings*
- G. *“Do not Report” for work instructions*
- H. *Designated COVID-19 “coordinators”*
- I. *Building safety*
- J. *Local Health Department resource*

Please refer to Appendix IV for detailed guidelines in each safety category.

Recommendation: Execute a communication plan to ensure that Virginians are informed of the changes to eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance that will coincide with the reopening of the Commonwealth.

Robust communication from state government engenders trust in its citizens, and providing Virginians with the guidance they need to make informed employment decisions is more important than ever in this time of uncertainty. The Governor’s Forward Virginia plan for the reopening of businesses will coincide with the gradual reinstatement of pre-COVID-19 eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance benefits. It is critical that the Governor’s Office and state agencies are proactive in raising awareness about these changes to ensure that no Virginian falls through the cracks.

- Develop clear and concise messaging around the changes in unemployment insurance in the post-COVID period, in advance of their implementation.
- Provide workforce system stakeholders with detailed press kits that can be used to amplify target messaging regionally and locally.
- Work with the Virginia Employment Commission to ensure that customers are being contacted via every possible channel to receive timely information about changes to their benefits.
- Communicate via press release when Virginia’s Career Works Centers reopen with information on the workforce resources available to job seekers.
- Evaluate opportunities to gradually reinstate pre-COVID-19 eligibility requirements to allow for more time to raise awareness about impending changes.

Recommendation: Expand Unemployment Insurance protections and, wherever possible, exempt high-risk individuals from pre-COVID-19 eligibility requirements when they are reinstated.

The following are several policies for consideration that would make unemployment insurance more accessible to Virginians whose employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Additional analysis is required to determine the fiscal impact.

- Exclude from the “suitable work” definition any employment that puts the health and safety of a worker at risk or that would endanger their co-workers by his/her presence in the workplace. Individuals are required to accept any “suitable work” offers while receiving unemployment benefits or risk no longer being eligible. This would provide flexibility for individuals to refuse offers to return to work that do not fit the new, temporary definition.
- Deem a leave of absence “involuntary” (i.e. eligible for benefits) if the individual has been directed by a health care provider to self-quarantine or has a dependent whose childcare or school is unavailable due to COVID-19. Exempt these individuals from the work requirement until the number of state-wide cases suggest that they are no longer at such high-risk.
- Permanently increase coverage period and weekly benefit amount to the maximum allowed under federal regulations.
- Implement the work share program authorized by Governor Northam as quickly as possible.

Recommendation: Ensure that Virginia’s workforce system agency partners are aligned in their reopening strategies and prepare Virginia’s Career Work Centers launch of public-facing services in conjunction with the reinstatement of the Unemployment Insurance job search requirement.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following Governor Northam’s Stay at Home Order, all Virginia Career Works Centers closed their physical buildings and suspended public-facing services on or before March 31, 2020. While all physical buildings remain closed to the public, partner agencies within the Virginia Career Works system continue operations to provide job seekers and businesses with workforce services through online, telephone, and postal communications.

After initially meeting weekly together, during the summer

2020 opening, directors of the Career Works Centers shall meet by teleconference weekly to review challenges and best practices during the summer reopening and fall period. Additionally, liaisons from each partner agency shall meet together to do the same.

As the Commonwealth begins implementing plans to reopen businesses and other critical operations, each partner agency is in charge of its respective reopening plan. However, the Virginia Career Works Centers often house multiple agency partners and will follow a phased approach to opening in a safe and effective manner.

The Virginia Career Works System has staged implementation to coincide with Forward Virginia, the plan the Governor outlined for reopening the Commonwealth of Virginia following the COVID-19 crisis. Some regions may need to develop policies specific to their local operations, including unique building layouts and staffing structures.

Please refer to Appendix V for the unified guidelines for Career Works Center Reopening.

Recommendation: Re-focus the Virginia Board of Workforce Development’s (VBWD) advisory efforts on workforce recovery for the remainder of 2020.

The VBWD is charged with advising the Governor and the Chief Workforce Advisor on workforce policy. This business-led board consists of five Cabinet Secretaries, training providers, and labor leaders, as well as majority from private enterprises that represent a variety of industry segments.

In March 2020, Virginia’s Combined State Plan was completed in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements. This plan was designed to lay a strategic foundation for the next four years of state workforce efforts, but then the COVID-19 emergency was declared. The plan did not anticipate the emergency and therefore contains no strategies for addressing the dramatic change in the Commonwealth’s workforce environment.

For the remainder of 2020, the Virginia Board of Workforce Development should prioritize re-employment strategies that train unemployed Virginians for new career paths.

Recommendation: Appeal to local government partners to preserve and potentially increase funding of their local career centers in order to handle the surge of Virginians that will require re-employment services.

While not all localities contribute resources for the operation of their local workforce centers and fewer still offer direct financial support, it is a concern that those that do will cut funding as they try to adjust their current budgets to deal with declining revenues.

Directors, the Governor's office, and the VBWD will communicate to them the importance of maintaining current funding of their centers to prevent diminished capacity during the surge of demand for re-employment services.

Appealing to localities currently not providing direct funding to do so, and considering creating a pot of matching funds to stimulate interest in blending funds should be considered

VI. Fall 2020 RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective: Prepare for the potential of a COVID-19 resurgence in the fall of 2020 and prepare policy recommendations for the 2021 General Assembly

Recommendation: In the event of a fall resurgence of COVID-19 ensure that Virginia's workforce system is prepared to provide all essential services virtually.

The closing of Virginia Career Works Centers in March happened rapidly and with little consistency across the state. Various plans were submitted to the Chief Workforce Advisor as public-facing services were eliminated. With the luxury of lessons learned from this rapid shutdown and the time provided in the summer to think through best practices, unified guidelines for shutting down physical locations in the event of a fall resurgence should be developed and then tailored to coincide with regional and local emergency plans.

Directors should update their teleworking plans, permissions, online support protocols, emergency closing plans, communications plans around closing and reopening, equipment and internet capabilities, and cloud technology for remote delivery of service. If schools and other training providers open back up only to have to close for online learning, Virginia should be ready to deploy training and accreditations such as GEDs online.

Recommendation: Convene business and labor groups to encourage the development of new strategies around worker supports and workweek models that could prevent future job loss.

In preparation for a fall resurgence, businesses should consider creative use of childcare and construction of shifts to keep operations going. Recently a 4+10 model was floated whereby the same shifts of workers work for four days and then are off for ten days. Four days is the maximum length if one is exposed and contracts the virus to when he or she is contagious. By keeping that shift at home for 10 days, it allows workers to find out if they have contracted the virus and (for most) to move through the contagious period before returning to work.

Recommendation: Ensure access to sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies by conscripting private industry in the Commonwealth to make masks, other personal protective equipment, and testing materials in Virginia.

The Code of Virginia grants the Governor considerably authority over both public and private systems in the event of a declared disaster. To ensure the Commonwealth is prepared to meet the challenge of COVID-19, the Governor should conscript relevant industries into providing -- at-cost -- PPE and other essential equipment. While this action has the potential to impact the profitability of the conscripted PPE producers in the short-term, long-term operational sustainability could be bolstered by requiring all employers deemed essential to maintain a sufficient, unexpired store personal protective equipment to prepare for future pandemics. This increase in future free-market demand should be more than enough for firms to make up losses incurred while contributing to the Commonwealth's crisis response.

Recommendation: Further streamline Rapid Response policies to prevent more layoffs and consider allocating additional state funds to pair with federal Rapid Response funds.

During March and April 2020, Rapid Response funds provided effective layoff aversion by funding teleworking solutions and deep cleaning. \$1.5 million was allocated to the 15 regional workforce board directors for this response measure. Almost all was distributed in one of two methods: competitive bidding or equally by jurisdiction served. Some states have enhanced their funding by budgeting additional state funds with their WIOA Title I funds to increase the numbers of businesses served. Blending funds can also allow cash to be funded up front rather than on a reimbursement basis.

Recommendation: If the General Assembly holds a special session, Virginia should consider the adoption of a Mini-Warn Act to ensure the Commonwealth has an accurate, real-time understanding of labor market conditions during a resurgence.

To ensure the Commonwealth has an accurate, real-time understanding of labor market conditions, Virginia should implement a Mini-Warn Act as has been done in Massachusetts, Hawaii, New York, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. This legislation allows the state to be notified of layoff events that impact a smaller number of people or occur at smaller firms. Virginia may wish to consider the adoption of similar legislation to better respond in the fall.

Recommendation: Ensure misclassification auditors at the Virginia Department of Taxation are prepared to begin their work protecting Virginia’s workers at the enactment date of January 1, 2021.

Make sure that misclassification audit efforts are prepared for the enactment date of January 1, 2021. The National Governors Association (NGA) and Aspen Institute project that during the post-COVID-19 period, employers may rapidly increase their use of independent contractors in lieu of hourly and full-time benefited employees.

Recommendation: Research and develop policy ideas for the 2021 General Assembly based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 emergency.

During the summer of 2020 and into the fall, discussions with the Policy team might be considered during the Governor’s legislative process in preparation for the 2021 General Assembly. Ideas being discussed include:

- portable benefits;
- unemployment insurance thresholds;
- equity and inclusion in the healthcare workforce;
- occupational safety standards;
- workplace accommodations for disabled Virginians;
- enhanced coordination within the Commonwealth’s vast workforce system.

VII. LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective: Lay the foundation for future resiliency through innovative workforce strategies.

Recommendation: Reaffirm the workforce system’s commitment to high-skilled, high-wage, stable employment.

The Commonwealth’s vibrant economy and dedicated workforce provide a solid foundation for overcoming the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. Before a state of emergency was declared, Virginia’s February 2020 unemployment rate was at an all-time low of 2.6%, and the state labor force had expanded for the 20th consecutive month. This strong workforce is one of the key reasons why Virginia was ranked as the top state for business in 2019.

While thousands of hardworking Virginians lost their jobs or had their hours reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that the impact fell disproportionately on the Commonwealth’s low wage and hourly workforce. The industries with the greatest employment loss - Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, and Other Services - are the same industries with the lowest average monthly earnings for employees. For more information on this data, please refer to Appendix II.

A resilient workforce and economy rests on access to high-quality, high-paying jobs for all Virginians, regardless of who they are or where they’re from. When workers don’t earn enough to support their families, they can’t put away savings to sustain themselves during a crisis. Hourly and low-wage workers are the least likely to have paid leave, teleworking ability, and benefits. This clear inequity of outcomes across industries and incomes makes for less resilient workers and a less resilient economy overall.

- ❖ *Deepen Virginia’s commitment to high-quality as well as in-demand jobs by developing a thoughtful methodology for the “Demand Occupations List.”*

The projected employment growth of any given occupation is an important metric for determining if it is worth Virginia’s time and resources to target. For this reason, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes the allocation of workforce resources to support “in-demand” industries, in particular.

Virginia’s workforce system introduces an additional concern: that target occupations be high-quality in the sense that they pay family-sustaining wages and require skills that are transferable in the labor market. Policymakers and practitioners in the Commonwealth endeavor to engage the training capacity and expertise of school divisions, VCCS, local workforce development boards (WDBs), the Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Career Works Centers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and a broad spectrum of supportive services to prepare citizens for jobs that are both in-demand and high-quality.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of a focus on high-quality jobs that make Virginia’s workers and economy more resilient, both in the long term and in advance of the next crisis. While Virginia’s broader workforce development strategy stresses the importance of “high-quality” jobs, opportunities still exist to deepen this commitment in practice.

To focus workforce resources more pointedly towards this end, Virginia should convert its existing “Demand Occupations List” to a “High-priority Occupations List” that, through careful analysis of available data and an eye towards regional and local differences, establishes a definitive logic for which occupations Virginia should target. The current “Demand Occupations List” guides much of the workforce system’s resource allocation without a stated commitment to jobs that are both high-quality and in-demand. This small change will allow the Commonwealth to better incorporate high-quality job metrics into its workforce development strategy, thereby ensuring that job seekers are directed towards occupations that genuinely lead to self-sufficiency and a high quality of life.

❖ *Develop a pathway to more stable employment for low-wage workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

To enhance the resiliency of Virginia’s economy in advance of the next crisis, the state’s workforce development strategy must reaffirm its commitment to improved employment outcomes for low-wage workers.

Thousands of Virginians have lost their jobs since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, most often in the industries that will have the hardest time recovering in the post-crisis period. Many of these workers have minimal training or education and earn low wages. The unprecedented public health emergency revealed the vulnerability of certain workers in the labor market, and there is an incredible opportunity in the recovery period to direct resources towards reskilling low-wage workers so they may move down a more stable and life-sustaining career path.

Data shows that the highest unemployment rates during the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in occupations requiring the least training, paying the lowest wages, and with the least upward mobility. Waiters and waitresses, food preparation workers, cashiers, retail salespersons and customer service representatives experienced the greatest job loss but have no viable inter-occupational alternatives to turn to as they enter back into the workforce. These workers are prime targets for retraining, education, and career planning, and Virginia should invest strategically to ensure that these workers see better outcomes in the post-crisis recovery period.

Virginia should allocate crisis funds to workers in occupations that fit the criteria above (i.e. minimum training required, low-income, few advancement opportunities.) Similar to the Trade Adjustment and Assistance Program, this intervention could provide access to re-training programs and employment services that lead to high-quality, high-demand

careers. Service delivery targeted specifically to this population would undoubtedly have a multiplier effect on the stability of Virginia’s workforce and economy more broadly.

Given the workforce system’s long-standing challenges in serving this population, it is also crucial that we develop and invest in innovative approaches that conform to community-specific needs and desires. The workforce system must develop a robust network of ambassadors to help expand awareness around job opportunities and employment services. In order to be successful, system representatives should reflect the community they serve and be able to personally speak to the value of workforce interventions. Highly effective services exist to help job-seekers on their journey, but many of the people who could benefit most currently struggle to identify and access the portfolio that is right for them.

❖ *Continue investments in Virginia’s world-class post-secondary education system to prepare young adults and adult workers for success in the 21st-century economy.*

A workforce strategy that prioritizes high-quality jobs will undoubtedly necessitate greater educational attainment for Virginia’s workers. An individual’s education is a powerful determinant of earning potential, and more than half of low-wage workers in the United States have a high school diploma or less. To improve employment outcomes for workers affected by the COVID-19 crisis, the Commonwealth will have to be both innovative and aggressive in its approach to enhancing access to education across regions, industries and skill levels.

In November 2018, Governor Northam released \$5.1M in federal funds to transform workforce programs offered through the Virginia Community College System. Currently, many programs intended to train students with applied skills require them to take general education courses before advancing to essential skills-based courses. To best prepare students with the skills needed for high-demand, well-paying jobs, VCCS redesigned career pathways so that skills training begins on day one of each program.

The community college redesign serves as a national model for providing low-wage workers with accessible pathways to high-quality and in-demand jobs. In the most recent General Assembly Session, Governor Northam took this approach a step further by proposing funding for the G3 program, “Get Skilled, Get a Job, and Give Back,” which provides tuition-free community colleges for low and middle income students in high-demand areas such as healthcare, technology, skilled trades, early childhood education, and public safety.

While the General Assembly authorized \$35 million in early 2020, a budget freeze resulting from the COVID-19 crisis has put the G3 program on hold. It is critical that funding be reinstated for this invaluable resource when the legislature convenes and that the Governor’s Office maintain its commitment to advocating for this funding. The program will provide thousands of Virginians, particularly those who lost their employment during the COVID-19 crisis or have been trapped in low-wage work, with the educational resources they need to level up in their careers. A workforce development

strategy with a focus on moving citizens into high-paying, high-skill jobs will depend entirely on equal, affordable access to a quality education.

Recommendation: Make strategic funding and infrastructure investments to enhance the ability of the Commonwealth’s workforce system to serve Virginians affected by COVID-19.

In recent years, Virginia’s highly federated workforce system has worked hard to streamline customer experiences, implement shared branding, and realize the goal of integrated service delivery implicit in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). However, the effective coordination of activity and alignment of incentives across partner organizations remained a substantial challenge during the COVID-19 crisis. With 24 discrete workforce efforts spread across nine agencies, the Commonwealth is program rich but system poor.

- ❖ *Designate a stable source of recurrent state funding to stand up and sustain essential administrative and technical infrastructure.*

Unfortunately, an abundance of programs does not translate into an abundance of resources. Public spending on workforce development has declined sharply since its peak in 1979. The climate of scarcity, combined with misaligned performance measures across the funding streams, does little to incentivize collaboration across agencies.

With the exception of the workforce credential grant program administered by the Virginia Community College System, the Commonwealth has not financially supported the WIOA workforce system. The vast majority of funding for Virginia’s workforce development system are still federal dollars, limiting flexibility and ability to invest in the long-term operational improvements required to meet current and future needs.

Indeed, federal dollars were never intended to fulfill this purpose. As Robert Giloth, Vice President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Center for Economic Opportunity, estimated in his 2004 book, *Workforce Development Politics: Civic Capacity and Performance*, federal funding provided by the Workforce Innovation Act (the precursor legislation to WIOA) in 1998 was only sufficient to serve 5% of eligible individuals nationally.

Firstly, highly effective workforce systems in states like [Kentucky](#) overcome the limitations of federally defined performance measures and funding mechanisms by directly appropriating money to an agency responsible for independent program evaluation. This approach allows states to exercise greater flexibility in its assessment of program performance, allowing for the unbiased optimization of operations. Recognizing the unmet need for objective analysis in Virginia, Governor McAuliffe’s administration attempted to create [the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Research and Statistics](#), but the unfunded research partnership lacked the resources and runway to realize their lofty ambitions.

❖ Consolidate administrative oversight and funding across the Virginia Career Works System.

Though it would require legislative approval, the elevation of the Chief Workforce Advisor to a Secretary-level position would bring much-needed, permanent attention and accountability to the workforce system's operations. This recommendation is consistent with proposed legislation put forward by the Northam Administration in the initial General Assembly session.

The Governor should add the Chief Workforce Advisor as a named Secretariat in the Code of Virginia, formally establishing the position's oversight authority over the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation in law.

A study should be performed to look at efficiency and efficacy of the system while studying other states administrative and budget infrastructure. A blueprint with recommendations for a unified, coordinated workforce system will be developed and presented to the next governor.

❖ Align workforce interventions to support a comprehensive set of bond-funded infrastructure investments.

In recent years, data has been collected showing that demand-driven workforce development approaches are demonstrably effective in improving the economic prospect of participants. As governments at all levels work to offset declining consumer demand through stimulus spending, it is of paramount importance that Virginia's workforce development imparts the skills that are most needed to advance public aims and support government contracts.

The Commonwealth is constitutionally constrained in its ability to incur operational debt, but established bond-based financial mechanisms exist to support long-term societal investments. To drive economic growth now and in the future, Virginia should take advantage of historically low interest rates and considerable debt capacity to address operation's long-deferred maintenance needs. Specifically, the Commonwealth should allow funds to flow beyond the physical infrastructure projects that have traditionally been supported by bonds.

Virginia already administers a number of programs, like the recently established Rural IT Apprenticeship initiative, that could be leveraged for workforce training. To ensure the Commonwealth's Information Technology infrastructure investments support broader economic development strategy, the Code of Virginia should be changed to allow Project Labor Agreements to be leveraged in all categories of state procurement, not just those relating to physical facilities.

Recommendation: Leverage technology to increase efficiency and improve workforce outcomes.

❖ Continue investing in shared Information Technology infrastructure such as the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal and Dashboard.

Virginia’s workforce development system is highly federated, complicating coordination in service delivery. This condition is common across states, as described in the following excerpt from Financing Workforce Development in a Devolutionary Era, an April 2016 discussion paper published in the Atlanta Federal Reserve:

“A common misconception about workforce development funding is that it is possible to make completely centralized and strategic investments in the type of training or programs that are offered. McCarthy (2014) suggests that a better metaphor for the workforce development system is one of a marketplace than a centralized system. In the workforce development marketplace, programs compete for limited federal funding in the form of student-driven funding from the Higher Education Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Pell Grants and student loans are student-driven in that students, or the consumers of training, decide where and how to spend their allotted funding. With students making consumption decisions, organizations authorized to accept these funds compete for customers and funding. Good and Strong (2015) argue that given these challenges, career navigation— independent of programs and funding—is a necessary but undeveloped resource to help students make better career and training choices in the workforce development marketplace.”

Ensuring Virginia’s workforce system prioritizes customer needs over agency performance measures has been among the primary goals in the ongoing redesign of Virginia’s technology ecosystem. Initially funded through a \$1.1 million system integration grant from the department labor and sustained through a collaborative funding agreement among participating workforce partners, the new Common Referral Portal and associated Workforce Data Trust will standardize and streamline triage and intake processes across programs, freeing up valuable staff time for the highly individualized career navigation services that data shows are most effective in changing the trajectory of customers’ lives.

With the solution’s successful launch on May 11th, Virginia’s workforce development system can now track participants and outcomes across discrete systems of record. It is a strong, data-driven belief that this strategic co-enrollment of customers across programs will substantially increase the collective impact of the workforce system as a whole, but additional value could easily be unlocked through investment in career navigation and remote training tools as part of this front-end application.

❖ Alter restrictions on inter-agency data sharing and require all relevant agencies to join the Workforce Data Trust.

Enabling the entire technology ecosystem is the Workforce Data Trust, a Virginia-owned, open-source software solution. The data trust allows workforce system partners to

securely and responsibly link their data to enhance their impact, empower data-driven decision making, and increase equity of opportunity.

Strong data governance is the foundation of the Workforce Data Trust. Each agency contributing data to the Data Trust has signed a multiparty Data Trust Agreement (DTA) and agreed to contribute resources to the operation, maintenance, and improvement of shared technology infrastructure.

This innovative system has to this point been developed and sustained through the collaboration of the Chief Workforce Advisor, the Commonwealth's Chief Data Officer, and six state agencies: the Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Employment Commission, the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. While this partnership has been highly successful in unlocking the insights hidden in their collective data, their efforts would benefit from the inclusion of additional partners.

Specifically, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, the Virginia Department of Occupational and Professional Regulation, and the Department of Health Professionals should join the Workforce Data Trust. The inclusion of the administrative data housed at each of these agencies will increase the quality of analysis, allowing a quick and more effective assessment of the efficacy of workforce development programs, the Commonwealth's economic development strategy, and regulatory enforcement apparatus.

Recommendation: Fund employee ownership to mitigate loss of middle-income jobs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

Significant challenges lay ahead in the post-COVID-19 recovery period for the Commonwealth's small businesses and the millions of Virginians they employ. These locally owned firms are the backbone of the state's economy, and their consolidation or closure would have a devastating impact on both current employment and future growth.

Data from a recent McKinsey & Company report indicates that small business employees, who make up almost half of the American workforce, are 19% more likely to be employed in a coronavirus-impacted occupation than their counterparts at large firms. While no previous economic disruption matches the scale of the current crisis, there are parallels to the Great Recession, when more than 170,000 small businesses closed over a period of two years.

The impact of the crisis on small businesses is further exacerbated by a phenomenon that existed long before COVID-19, which is the significant number of Virginia jobs lost annually as a result of the "silver tsunami" of retiring small business owners. Nearly 60,000 Virginia firms are owned by baby boomers, supporting a payroll of \$25.8 billion and over 630,000 employees. The majority of these otherwise sustainable firms will close upon owner retirement due to a lack of succession planning.

In order to prevent the potential hemorrhaging of small business jobs in the post-COVID-19 period, Virginia should establish a dedicated loan guarantee pool to facilitate the conversion of small businesses to employee-owned firms.

Given the recent recognition of worker-owned firms as a business category in the Code of Virginia, the Commonwealth is well positioned to become a national leader in this emerging sector. This strategy would accomplish the following:

- Provide retiring business owners with a viable alternative to business closure that allows them to defer capital gains tax, preserve their legacy in the community, and ensure job stability for their employees;
- Retain the high-quality, middle-skill jobs within Virginia's economy that were so decimated by the Great Recession;
- In advance of the next crisis, invest in an innovative business structure that has been shown to be more resilient than conventional firms during times of economic downturn.

A successful transition to employee ownership depends on sufficient funding for workers to purchase the firm from the prior owner. Most debt financing requires that one business owner take on the risk of default by issuing a personal guarantee. This requirement makes it particularly difficult for worker cooperatives to access financing, both from traditional lenders and the federal Small Business Administration (SBA). The proposed loan guarantee pool would offset the risk to lenders of issuing loans for conversions and serve as a valuable job retention mechanism for the Commonwealth.

Recommendation: Continue the Governor's efforts to ensure comprehensive deployment of broadband throughout the Commonwealth to allow equal opportunity for remote work, training, and education.

With a focus on reopening education equitably and safely, the Governor's Education Work Group offered a series of recommendations on addressing the digital divide in both workforce training and education. The recommendations, which span agency initiatives, executive action, and short and long term legislative action, should serve as a framework for how to ensure broadband access, affordability, and skills needed for Virginians to compete in the post-COVID-19 workforce.

Recommendation: Achieve financial literacy for all Virginians, with a particular focus on the importance of emergency funds to financial stability.

While a national problem, Virginia could approach the lack of financial literacy more easily now since many Virginia households suffered great panic as their jobs were eliminated during the COVID-19 emergency. Research shows that at the onset of the pandemic, approximately half of Americans could not afford a \$400 shock. Without emergency funds, Virginians who were not receiving a paycheck had to wait weeks for the Unemployment Insurance or CARES Act benefits that they needed to buy food and pay rent or their mortgage. Thinking through high

school curriculums and finding ways to educate Virginians who are out of school will ensure better financial resiliency for citizens in the future.

VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - SELECT SLIDES FROM VEDP RESEARCH

View VEDP’s analysis here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/198DeS3xnhUDtqoB1TTPewpOV-
uiUKbEA/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/198DeS3xnhUDtqoB1TTPewpOV-
uiUKbEA/view?usp=sharing)

APPENDIX II - TEAMS THAT PREPARED THIS PLAN

1. Survey team came from the Virginia Community College System and included:

Dr. Lori Dwyer

Associate Vice Chancellor of Programs

Randy Stamper

Assistant Vice Chancellor of Grants and Federal Programs

George Taratsas

Director, WIOA Administration and Compliance

2. Data team came from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Pam Harder

Managing Director, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Debbie Melvin

Assistant Vice President, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Cole Pearce

Senior Analyst, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Rima Chavda

Analyst, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

3. The plan was developed and written by the Governor’s Office

Stacy Brayboy

Director, Intergovernmental Affairs

Jane Dittmar

Deputy Chief Workforce Advisor

Meaghan Green
Special Assistant, Chief Workforce Advisor

Felix Schapiro
Policy Analyst, Chief Workforce Advisor

Michael Saunders
Web Developer

APPENDIX III – WORKPLACE SAFETY GUIDELINES

Central to a successful economic recovery is workers’ willingness to return to their workplaces once businesses re-open. This is possible only if workers are safe in doing so. These were developed using the lens “do these measures decrease the possibility of transmission”. These guidelines form the recommendations to employers for ensuring safe working conditions and build upon and do not contradict the guidelines developed by the Business Recovery group.

- A. *Telework, staggered workstations or staggered shifts* – Encourage telework whenever possible. For those businesses where telework is not feasible, temporarily move or stagger workstations to ensure six feet of separation between co-workers and between members of the public. Implement staggered shifts for both work periods and break periods. Consider cohort scheduling where groups of employees only work with employees in their group.
- B. *Face Coverings* – Where possible, employees and customers should utilize face coverings. Where six feet of physical distance is not possible in a given business setting, employers should provide face covering to employees.

*** It should be noted that there is still widespread concern about the availability of facemasks for workers. Concern involves access to inventory and the worry that workers will be asked to reuse contaminated masks. A potential strategy for addressing the facemask shortage is outlined in a later recommendation.

- C. *In-person work gatherings* – Limit in-person work-related gatherings, including conferences, trade shows, and training. When in-person meetings need to occur, keep meetings as short as possible, limit the number of employees in attendance, and use physical distancing practices. Use messaging boards or digital messaging for pre-shift meeting information. Limit the number of employees in break rooms and stagger breaks to discourage gatherings.
- D. *Cleaning and disinfecting* – Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of high contact areas and hard surfaces, including check out stations and payment pads, building entrance push/pull pads, door knobs/handles, dining tables/chairs, light switches, handrails, restrooms, floors, and equipment. Follow CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection and use an EPA-approved disinfectant to clean. For high contact areas, routinely disinfect surfaces at least every 2 hours. Certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads, should be cleaned and disinfected before each use. To the extent tools or equipment must be shared, provide access to and instruct workers to use an EPA-approved disinfectant to clean items before and after use. Remove commonly touched non-essential items such as magazines, self-serve coffee, and candy jars.
- E. *Hand sanitizing stations* – Provide a place for employees to wash hands with soap and water, or provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol. When developing staff schedules, implement additional short breaks to increase the frequency with which staff can wash hands with soap and water. Alternatively, consider providing

alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol so that workers can frequently sanitize their hands. Provide best hygiene practices to employees on a regular basis, including washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and practicing respiratory etiquette protocols. A CDC training video is available on their website.

- F. *Health screening* – Prior to a shift and on days employees are scheduled to work, employers should screen employees prior to starting work. Employees should also self-monitor their symptoms by self-taking of temperature to check for fever and utilizing the questions provided in the VDH Interim Guidance for COVID -19 Daily Screening of Employees before reporting to work. For employers with established occupational health programs, employers can consider measuring temperature and assessing symptoms of employees prior to starting work/before each shift. CDC considers a person to have a fever when he or she has a measured temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or greater, feels warm to the touch, or gives a history of feeling feverish. Implement practices such as those described in VDH Interim Guidance for COVID - 19 Daily Screening of Employees for examples of a screening questionnaire. If implementing health checks, conduct them safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Confidentiality should be respected. Post signage at the entrance that states that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, or known exposure to a COVID-19 case in their prior 14 days, is permitted in the establishment.

- G. *“Do not Report” for work instructions* – Instruct employees who are sick to stay at home and not report to work. Employers should post signage in the common languages of the employees telling employees not to come to work when sick. Develop or adopt flexible sick leave policies to ensure that sick employees do not report to work. Policies should allow employees to stay home if they are sick with COVID-19, if they need to self-quarantine due to exposure, and if they need to care for a sick family member. Employers should recommend that employees follow CDC guidance on If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone. Some employees are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. These vulnerable employees include individuals over age 65 and those with underlying medical conditions. Vulnerable employees should be encouraged to self-identify and employers should take particular care to reduce their risk of exposure, while making sure to be compliant with relevant Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) regulations. Consider offering vulnerable employee’s duties that minimize their contact with customers and other employees (e.g., restocking shelves rather than working as a cashier), if agreed to by the employee. Protect employees at higher risk for severe illness by supporting and encouraging options to telework if possible.

- H. *Designated COVID-19 “coordinator”* – Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.

- I. *Building safety* – If the building has not been occupied for the last 7 days, there are additional public health considerations that should be considered, such as taking measures to ensure the safety of your building water system.

- J. *Local Health Department resource* – Establish a relationship with your local health department and know who to contact for questions. For healthcare facilities, additional guidance is provided on CDC’s Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities.

APPENDIX IV - UNIFIED GUIDELINES FOR WORKFORCE CENTER REOPENING

Center activity during Phase One - subject to change by regional appeal to the Governor

Phase One of the Governor's Forward Virginia plan maintains social distancing requirements, limits groups of 10 or more individuals, and requires enhanced cleaning, disinfection, and workplace safety procedures. In order to coincide with Executive Order 55 and Executive Order 61, the Virginia Career Works physical centers will continue to be closed.

While the Centers are closed, all services continue to be provided to job seekers and businesses virtually, electronically, and/or one-on-one while adhering to social distancing requirements. The following describes how services are provided through this phase:

- *Electronic Eligibility* – Revise the application and eligibility process, as allowed under federal and state regulations, to an electronic process that allows for continued enrollments into the programs. Electronic methods include technology applications such as Zoom, DocuSign, OneFlow, Scanner Pro and others.
- *Telephone Services* – All programs provide telephonic services to customers.
- *Referrals for Services* – Individuals who contact the local areas and Virginia Career Works Center staff with workforce development service needs are assessed for additional referral opportunities and referred accordingly.
- *Virginia Career Works Referral Portal* – The Portal is operational and allows Virginians seeking workforce development services to obtain information and referrals to service providers.
- *Business Services* – While some businesses are closed for operations, other businesses continue to need assistance with recruitment, screening, hiring events, and/or training services. Virginia Career Works Centers will provide services using technology and local emergency job boards.
- *Video Conferencing Software* – Video conferencing software has been a great asset during the pandemic allowing Virginia Career Works staff to communicate with job seekers, and also to conduct staff meetings, conferences, training sessions, and professional development. Virginia Career Works staff will utilize software to interview and record sessions with businesses to promote to the general public, as well as different partners, for information about additional resources in the community during this time.
- *Electronic Case Management* – Case management can now be conducted electronically with the addition of the Virginia Workforce Connection document scanning capabilities. This allows eligibility documentation, paperwork, and all files to be stored electronically so it is no longer necessary to maintain physical files at the Virginia Career Works Centers.
- *Resource Pages* – Local Workforce Development Boards are developing resource pages on their websites that include links to federal, state, and local resources that are available to job seekers and businesses in their area.
- *Virtual Job Fairs* – Centers are experimenting with virtual job fair technology that will allow businesses that are hiring to have hiring events and connect with job seekers from their homes.

- *Virtual Workshops* – Virtual technology where available is utilized to provide workshops that job seekers can access without having to attend an in-person session. These workshops are linked to the Virginia Career Works Centers’ websites and provide career and work readiness skills training and other basic career services.
- *Distance Learning for Training* – A number of the occupational skills training providers within the Commonwealth of Virginia have gone to distance learning and online learning for their classes. The local Workforce Development Boards shall continue to access these classes for those job seekers that are interested in training opportunities. Examples of these providers are the Virginia Community College System, MedCerts, ProTrain, and various Information Technology training providers.
- *Distance Learning for Youth Program Elements* – Youth service staff are utilizing, where possible, virtual curriculums, software and apps such as, but not limited to; Talk Space for therapy, Virtual Job Shadowing for Work Experience, KHAN Academy for academic remediation and learning, Alison for financial literacy, and Amazon. Further information regarding high-quality, distance education curriculum vetted by the Title II adult education program can be found on the Virginia [Approved Distance Education List](#). These curriculums may be considered for attendance hours by enrolled adult education students, according to the [Assessment and Distance Education Policy for Adult Education and Literacy Programs](#).

Center activity during Phase Two (June 1, 2020) subject to change by regional request to the Governor

Phase Two of the Forward Virginia plan provides more relief from COVID-19 restrictions and allows selected Virginia Career Works Centers to open facilities.

Each Local Workforce Development Area will open one comprehensive Virginia Career Works Center, following social distancing and other safety protocols as provided in the attached Safety Protocol Checklist. Depending on location, building square footage, and other local considerations, centers may only be able to open to the public by appointment. Each Local Workforce Development Board in consultation with Local Elected Officials, will select the Center to open within their respective Local Workforce Development Area. Regions authorized by the Governor to delay their Phase I transition may delay their opening of a Center until a later date. If there is some other reason for delaying an opening notice will be provided along with supporting information, to the Governor’s Chief Workforce Advisor for review and approval.

There are several other agencies and departments that supply services as part of a Centers operation. Partner agencies and departments will coordinate and collaborate on any challenges to delivering services and communicate through the newly established “workforce cabinet” that will meet weekly during all phases outlined in the Governor’s Forward Virginia plan.

Directors and their Local Workforce Development Boards will implement the following reopening measures:

- *Coordination with Business Solutions Teams* – Directors will work with the Business Solutions Teams to ensure that outreach to the business community is conducted in a coordinated manner that is responsive to business needs.
- *Communication with the Governor’s Office* – A weekly teleconference for all directors, VCCS staff, and members of the Governor’s workforce office will be convened through Phase III to discuss best practices regarding challenges and opportunities faced by the Virginia Career Works Centers and to share other important federal, state, and regional information impacting Virginia’s workforce system.
- *Conflict Resolution Protocols* – Each Director will establish protocols to assist Career Works staff in de-escalating or referring to difficult situations that may arise with Center customers.
- *Security Services* – In order to ensure the safety of the staff working at the Centers, security measures, including security guard services and security equipment such as video capability, will be installed. The Virginia Employment Commission will coordinate and execute procurement of security services to be provided during the recovery period.
- *Plexiglas shields for reception/intake desks* – Virginia Career Works Center Directors will determine a need for these shields at their reception/intake desks or in other key locations throughout the Center where staff may need to interact at close range. The Virginia Employment Commission will serve to coordinate and execute procurement for purchase.
- *Cleaning services for overnight deep cleaning per CDC standards* – Each Virginia Career Works Center will determine the need for additional cleaning services and supplies to assist with maintaining the enhanced cleaning and disinfection guidelines set forth by the Governor’s Office.
- *Personal protective equipment (PPE) i.e. masks and gloves* – PPE for Virginia Career Works Center staff assisting customers is necessary for the Centers to reopen. Disposable masks for customers would also be beneficial. PPE shall be available to be used per the Governor’s Executive Orders. Local Workforce Development Boards, in consultation with Chief Elected Officials, will have discretion to require all Center customers to use face masks when entering and utilizing services at a Virginia Career Works Center.
- *Additional Laptops/Computers/Tablets and Equipment* – Virginia Career Works Centers will determine the need for additional laptops, computers, tablets, and equipment to support social distancing requirements.
- *Additional Signage* – Virginia Career Works Centers will procure and post signage, including directional, health screening, and informational signage that can instruct customers on how to visit the Centers safely.

Center activity during Phase Three

Aligning with Phase Three of the Forward Virginia plan, all Virginia Career Works Centers will open in adherence with recommendations from the Governor’s office, the Virginia Department of Health, and the CDC.

All regions will communicate with their Grant Recipients, localities making up the Local Workforce Development Areas, Virginia Career Works partners, and the Governor’s office to address events where a positive COVID-19 case occurs within the Centers and follow directions for steps to be taken to quarantine affected staff and sanitize the Center to eliminate risk of reinfection. Centers may be closed to the public during this process.