

Recommendations

Virginia's Workforce Development Programs

RECOMMENDATION 1

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act to direct state agencies to collaborate with the Board of Workforce Development to develop and define standard categories of workforce development program activities to use when tracking workforce development program expenditures and reporting these expenditures to the board. The General Assembly may also wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require state agencies to adopt these categories. These agencies should include the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Social Services, the Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Employment Commission, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (Chapter 2, page 22).

RECOMMENDATION 2

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act to direct state agencies that receive general funds for the administration of workforce development programs to collect data on the total amount of general funds spent by local entities, to distinguish between administrative and program-related expenditures, and to report data in the greatest possible detail (Chapter 2, page 24).

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development should, in collaboration with the Chief Workforce Development Advisor, establish goals and objectives that apply across all of Virginia's workforce development programs and that reflect the state's highest workforce development priorities. The board should also develop performance measures related to these goals and objectives, and the performance of all workforce development programs should be regularly assessed using these measures (Chapter 2, page 29).

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Virginia Board of Education should amend the regulations governing career and technical education to require school divisions to include a minimum number of employers on career and technical education advisory committees and to convene advisory committees at least every six months (Chapter 3, page 42).

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Virginia Community College System should require community colleges to include a minimum number of employers on career and technical education advisory committees and to convene advisory committees at least every six months (Chapter 3, page 42).

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Virginia Board of Education should amend the regulations governing career and technical education to require (i) local career and technical education advisory committees to submit to their school division any recommendations for improving the relevancy of career and technical education program offerings resulting from the committees' annual review of courses and (ii) school divisions to submit these recommendations to VDOE to verify that reviews of course relevancy are being undertaken (Chapter 3, page 43).

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Virginia Department of Education should develop specific criteria for determining whether new career and technical education courses proposed by school divisions are justified and only approve courses for which justification is demonstrated. The criteria should include demonstrating that there is employer demand for the course that is not sufficiently met through other nearby training and education programs and that there are or will be job openings in the region in occupations associated with the course (Chapter 3, page 44).

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Virginia Board of Education should amend the regulations governing career and technical education to require school divisions to incorporate labor market data in the criteria used to select the program areas that are the basis of their career and technical education programs (Chapter 3, page 45).

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Virginia Community College System should require community colleges to use a structured process, such as the Developing a Curriculum Process, for reviewing the relevance of their career and technical education courses and the curricula used in those courses at least annually. Community colleges should incorporate analysis of employer input and labor market data into these reviews (Chapter 3, page 45).

RECOMMENDATION 10

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require the employment services division of the Virginia Employment Commission to serve as a labor market analysis resource and to actively assist state and local workforce development entities in targeting their resources to programs that reflect the state's labor market (Chapter 3, page 46).

RECOMMENDATION 11

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require the Virginia Board of Workforce Development to evaluate the extent to which the state's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs. This evaluation should take place every two years (Chapter 3, page 47).

RECOMMENDATION 12

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to designate the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) as the single state agency responsible for administering all aspects of the registered apprenticeship program, and to transfer these responsibilities to VCCS from the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (Chapter 3, page 50).

RECOMMENDATION 13

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act to create a competitive grant program that would award funds to local workforce development entities that propose to create and administer education and training services for a group of employers from the same industry for the purpose of reducing labor shortages in that industry (Chapter 3, page 52).

RECOMMENDATION 14

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require the Virginia Board of Workforce Development to designate a single entity in each region to lead the development of a local plan for employer engagement. The plan should, at a minimum: (i) specify the policies and protocols to be followed by all local workforce development agencies in the region, (ii) address how agencies will involve employers in the formation of new workforce development initiatives, (iii) identify what activities will be undertaken to address employers' specific workforce needs, and (iv) describe the format and content of a single, user-friendly resource that would help employers identify and access available workforce development services. Each regional entity should submit its employer engagement plan to the board for review at a minimum of every four years, and the board should recommend changes to the plans, if needed, to ensure consistency across the regions. Employer engagement plans should be developed by July 1, 2015 (Chapter 3, page 54).

RECOMMENDATION 15

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require the Virginia Board of Workforce Development to (i) direct each workforce investment region to designate a single entity to lead the region's workforce development efforts; (ii) direct each workforce investment region to create a single regional workforce development council for identifying initiatives that could be undertaken collaboratively; (iii) develop guidelines for regions to follow in establishing and operating regional councils, in collaboration with state and local entities that administer the state's workforce development programs; and (iv) amend existing eligibility criteria for Workforce Investment Act incentive funds to include each region's designation of a lead workforce development entity and formation of a regional workforce development council. All regions should be required to create regional councils by July 1, 2016 (Chapter 4, page 63).

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Virginia Community College System should, in consultation with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) directors, identify and share best practices that are being implemented by WIBs to expand their role beyond Workforce Investment Act programs in order to influence and advance broader workforce development initiatives in their regions (Chapter 4, page 66).

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development should, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the Department of Education, develop a statewide policy emphasizing that school divisions are expected to regularly participate in workforce development initiatives being undertaken in the state's workforce investment regions. This policy should include guidelines for the manner in which school divisions are expected to participate and the types of initiatives in which school division participation is most expected (Chapter 4, page 67).

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development should, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, develop a statewide policy emphasizing that regional economic development agencies are expected to regularly participate in workforce development initiatives undertaken in the state's workforce investment regions. This policy should include guidelines for the manner in which regional economic development agencies are expected to participate and the types of initiatives in which participation is expected (Chapter 4, page 70).

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Chief Workforce Development Advisor should create a working group composed of staff from the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and the U.S. Department of Labor to develop a plan by July 1, 2015 to achieve full co-location of VEC offices and all one-stop workforce centers. Until full-time co-location is achieved, VEC and VCCS should ensure that each one-stop workforce center has at least one full-time staff person from VEC on site, and each VEC office that is not co-located has a full-time WIA staff person on site (Chapter 4, page 75).

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and Virginia Community College System should establish formal, written policies and procedures specifying how clients should be referred to other workforce development programs and how referrals should be monitored by the respective agencies. These policies and procedures should be followed by all local VEC offices and one-stop workforce centers (Chapter 4, page 75).

RECOMMENDATION 21

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to delegate several responsibilities of the Board of Workforce Development to other state agencies, such as the Virginia Employment Commission and the Virginia Community College System. These responsibilities include those related to identifying the current and future workforce needs of employers and associated training requirements, reviewing and recommending industry credentials, developing Workforce Investment Act incentive grant applications, and administering the Career Readiness Certificate Program (Chapter 5, page 83).

RECOMMENDATION 22

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to establish the Career Pathways Workgroup as a formal advisory council to the Board of Workforce Development and direct it to develop and recommend (i) new training strategies, (ii) strategies to match trained workers with jobs, (iii) cross-agency performance measures in coordination with other agencies, and (iv) workforce development strategies for veterans (Chapter 5, page 83).

RECOMMENDATION 23

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to clarify the role of the Virginia Employment Commission in contributing to the state's development of a coordinated system of workforce development programs and specify the responsibilities that fall outside of the scope of the agency's program administration functions. These responsibilities should include collaborating with the Board of Workforce Development and other state agencies on initiatives to improve the coordination and efficiency of the state's workforce development programs, assisting the board with identifying the training and education requirements associated with the state's current and future labor market, and collaborating on statewide efforts to improve the effectiveness of programs' outreach and service delivery to employers (Chapter 5, page 84).

RECOMMENDATION 24

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to authorize the Virginia Board of Workforce Development to hire a director and staff to support the board in fulfilling its most strategic and necessary responsibilities, especially those that span multiple agencies and programs (Chapter 5, page 85).

RECOMMENDATION 25

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require the Board of Workforce Development to meet at least once every three months (Chapter 5, page 86).

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Board of Workforce Development should designate a committee that focuses exclusively on the state's most important short-term and long-term workforce development priorities and that establishes the priorities of the board as a whole. This committee should be composed exclusively of the board's business members and be led by the board Chair (Chapter 5, page 86).

RECOMMENDATION 27

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to give the Board of Workforce Development responsibility for developing new policies related to the following aspects of workforce development for those state agencies that are responsible for administering workforce programs: (i) engagement with the business community, (ii) alignment of education and workforce training opportunities with the needs of the business community, (iii) coordination and collaboration between workforce programs intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce programs, and (iv) accountability for and transparency of the expenditures of public funds for workforce programs and programs' performance. These policies should be developed in consultation with the governor and the governing boards of those state agencies and, when appropriate, should be implemented by promulgation of regulations through those boards to ensure that these policies do not conflict with federal or state requirements specific to those state agencies and their programs. When the promulgation of regulations is unnecessary, state agencies' boards should approve the Board of Workforce Development's policies before they are adopted (Chapter 5, page 88).

RECOMMENDATION 28

The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act to require the Chief Workforce Development Advisor to evaluate progress made by the Board of Workforce Development and the state and local workforce development agencies toward achieving a more coordinated, efficient, and responsive system. This evaluation should consider, at a minimum, (i) the effectiveness of efforts to ensure that training and education requirements match the state's labor market, (ii) the extent to which local workforce development programs have implemented strategies to coordinate their service delivery efforts in Virginia's workforce regions, (iii) the effectiveness of employer engagement strategies being followed by local workforce development programs in Virginia's workforce regions, (iv) employers' satisfaction with the state's workforce and its workforce development programs, and (v) the extent to which state agencies have adopted workforce development policies that are consistent across agencies and that reflect the Board of Workforce Development's priorities. A report on the findings of this evaluation should be submitted to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees no later than January 1, 2018. The report should include recommendations to make further progress in these areas, if needed, and should assess the advantages and disadvantages of consolidating programs and agencies, as well as their funding streams, under a single supervisory board (Chapter 5, page 88).

RECOMMENDATION 29

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to include representatives of the information technology and science, technology, engineering, and math fields on the Board of Workforce Development (Chapter 5, page 89).

RECOMMENDATION 30

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending the Code of Virginia to require the Chief Workforce Development Advisor to appoint to an advisory council to the board (i) representatives of the Department of Education, Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Community College System, State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and the Department of Social Services and (ii) representatives from local entities, including staff of one or more local workforce investment boards, one or more community colleges, one or more school divisions, and one or more local economic development representatives (Chapter 5, page 93).
