
STRATEGIC PLAN

JUNE 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 2022

***Approved by the SVWDB Board of Directors
and Chief Elected Officials Consortium***

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Developed by the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board's
Strategic Planning Team

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: The Strategic Planning Process.....	4
Data Snapshots.....	6
Organizational Overview.....	9
Vision, Mission, Values, Customers	
Organizational Core Values.....	10
Strategic Priorities and Goals.....	11

Planning Team Members

Brian Brown, Former SVWDB Board Vice Chair

Dr. John A. Downey, President, Blue Ridge Community College

Randy Doyle, SVWDB Board Member, Holtzman Oil

Joan Hollen, SVWDB Data and Communications Specialist

Dr. Sharon Johnson, SVWDB CEO

Joe Kennedy, SVWDB Finance Director

Dr. Jay Langston, SVWDB Board, Executive Director, Shenandoah Valley Partnership

Jo Lee Loveland-Link, SVWDB Treasurer, Volvox

Todd Lynn, K-12 and Chairman of the Workforce Initiative (WI) Board, Shenandoah County Public Schools

Tristan Meadows, SVWDB Workforce Services Director Central/South

Debbie Melvin, Assistant Vice President, Talent Solutions, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Nadine Pottinga, United Way Northern Shenandoah Valley

Ridge Schuyler, Pilot Director for Network2Work with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development

Yolanda Shields, SVWDB Board Member, YES Builds

Ashley Shickle, GO VA Region 8 and Workforce Initiative (WI) Board staff, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission

Jeff Stapel, SVWDB Board Chair, Shickel Corporation

Robin Sullenberger, SVWDB Board Member, Sullenberger & Associates

Bonnie Zampino, SVWDB Workforce Services Director North

Lori Strumpf, Facilitator

Strumpf Associates: Center for Strategic Change

INTRODUCTION

The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence – it is to act with yesterday's logic.
Peter Drucker

What are the strategic challenges that the workforce system is likely to face over the next eighteen months and how will these challenges impact the opportunities people and businesses have for a high quality of life in our region? This question fueled the development of this plan for the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board (SVWDB) and resides at the heart of our strategic plan. Many strategic challenges were identified. The most prevalent were:

- Employers cannot find qualified applicants and the outlook is not promising.
- Technical advancements create demand for highly skilled workers, a trend that is expected to continue.
- Basic work skills, something taken for granted in the past, must be taught.
- Deliberate efforts to reach out and provide access to individuals who have been disenfranchised are necessary.
- The Shenandoah Valley's ratio of wage to cost of living is lower than national average.

While we provide answers in the form of strategic goals and strategies for the next eighteen months, we know that the most effective organizations in the twenty-first century will continuously refine their strategies as the external landscape evolves and new lessons are learned. In this spirit, our strategic plan is intended to be a dynamic blueprint for the sustainability and growth of the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board and the region's workforce development system. It is the product of intensive discussions by the Strategic Planning Committee members and feedback from a variety of stakeholders and staff. This plan lays the foundation for the organization's operations plan, which will outline key actions and resources required to execute the strategies found in this plan.

During the latter part of 2020, the SVWDB began the process of developing this strategic plan. With the shifting environment due to the pandemic of 2020, the board decided that developing a strategy for the next 3-years would not maintain relevancy. Instead, this plan has a time horizon of eighteen months, through June of 2022. The planning process included a Strategic Planning Committee made up of WDB members and other key community members. The Committee met four times to examine current labor market data that would inform strategic challenges over the next 18 months. Focus groups of businesses, WDB board members, partners, and job seekers were conducted to solicit their perceptions of what the workforce system's challenges might be over the next 15 to 18 months.

This plan is intended to drive positive change within the SVWDB and the community and embrace the lessons learned during this pandemic. In response to stay-at-home orders across Virginia, our organization had to quickly shift to virtual operations and deal with other challenges to our capacity. We made the shift quickly and staff rapidly adapted and learned. The plan provides a sharper focus to our work in the form of three strategic goals designed to achieve high community impact over the next eighteen months. It requires us to rethink how we organize our time and talent, and where we invest dollars.

With a fresh perspective on our mission, understanding of what we do well, and the environment in which we operate, the SVWDB will pursue the following strategic priorities:

- Develop and deliver workforce services to individuals who are underemployed¹, underrepresented and/or underserved to expand the talent pipeline of youth and adults.
- Create a collective impact strategy to influence the labor force participation rate in the region.
- Create a collective impact strategy to promote family sustaining wages.

This plan should be read within the context of these priorities. It is our intention to influence the wage rate and labor force participation rate well beyond the eighteen months of this plan. We are also committed to ensuring the workforce system is inclusive, creating pathways and access for all. Stanford's Center on Poverty and Inequality's 2017 annual "State of the Union" report found profound and persisting inequalities in the United States. It is our goal to effectively address barriers to employment in our community by addressing any underlying disparities that may exist and to challenge ourselves to understand and correct the inequities we discover within the workforce development system. Currently, we are instituting efforts to expand access and access points to services, including the addition of a Workforce Equity Specialist. We will continue to provide the leadership required to reform the workforce development system to serve people of color in culturally response ways.

A plan is of little value by itself. The strategic plan is a broad road map and there is still much to be determined relative to implementation. This document is the framework to continue our growth and ensure the sustainability of our high-performance, customer-focused organization that continues to benefit all stakeholders –our customers, our partners, and the community.

¹ For the purposes of this plan, the underemployed are defined as the Virginia 2020 ALICE Report defines them: an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE represents 'the growing number of households in our communities that do not earn enough to afford basic necessities'.

DATA SNAPSHOTS

The following data describes the area and is key to setting the context for the strategy contained in this plan. The Shenandoah Valley (WDA IV) includes the following counties and cities:

Augusta County, Virginia	Shenandoah County, Virginia
Bath County, Virginia	Warren County, Virginia
Clarke County, Virginia	Buena Vista City, Virginia
Frederick County, Virginia	Harrisonburg City, Virginia
Highland County, Virginia	Lexington City, Virginia
Page County, Virginia	Staunton City, Virginia
Rockbridge County, Virginia	Waynesboro City, Virginia
Rockingham County, Virginia	Winchester City, Virginia

Population and Commuting Patterns

- The population in the Shenandoah Valley (LWDA 4) was 530,089 (*Source: American Community Survey data for 2014-2018*).
- The region has a civilian labor force of 266,131 with a participation rate of 61.5%.
- Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Shenandoah Valley (WDA 4), 27.0% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 32.9% in the nation. (*Source: Jobs EQ*)
- The median household income in the Shenandoah Valley (WDA 4) is \$58,351 and the median house value is \$215,557. (*Source: Jobs EQ*)
- The population is projected to **increase** over the next 10 years.

	LWIA IV	%Change	Virginia	%Change
2000	444,045		7,079,030	
2010	508,933	14.61 %	8,001,024	13.02 %
2020	542,758	6.65 %	8,744,273	9.29 %
2030	593,706	9.39 %	9,546,958	9.18 %
2040	635,421	7.03 %	10,201,530	6.86 %

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

- **More** people commute out of the area to work than live and work in the area.

LWDA IV Commuting Patterns

People who live and work in the area	154,421
In-Commuters	54,407
Out-Commuters	84,445
Net In-Commuters (In-Commuters minus Out-Commuters)	-30,038

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

Cost of Living

- The cost of living is 7.2% higher in Shenandoah Valley (WDA 4) than the U.S. average. The Cost of Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. *(Source: Jobs EQ)*

Employment and Education

- The largest sector in the Shenandoah Valley is Manufacturing, employing 33,185 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Health Care and Social Assistance (32,026 workers) and Retail Trade (26,344).
- Sectors in the Shenandoah Valley with the highest average wages per worker are Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$116,872), Utilities (\$65,131), and Finance and Insurance (\$65,041).
- Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Transportation and Warehousing (+3,237 jobs), Manufacturing (+1,593), and Construction (+1,342).
- Over the next 5 years, employment in the Shenandoah Valley is projected to expand by 5,214 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +1.3% projected rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+1,681 jobs), Construction (+699), and Transportation and Warehousing (+627).
- The average worker in the Shenandoah Valley earned annual wages of \$42,950 as of 2020Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 3.5% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$58,849 in the nation as of 2020Q2. *(Source for all bullets above: Jobs EQ)*
- Of those 18 and older, 35% have graduated high school or have a GED, 23% have some college, 6% have an Associate's Degree, and 14% have a Bachelor's Degree.

	LWIA IV	Virginia	United States
8th Grade or Less	22,558	275,329	12,639,425
Some High School	36,477	464,075	20,093,117
High School Grad/GED	142,137	1,633,105	68,044,371
Some College	93,626	1,457,887	57,431,237
Associate's Degree	25,285	440,219	18,586,866
Bachelor's Degree	56,891	1,258,661	42,027,629
Graduate or Professional Degree	33,382	862,686	24,008,551
	410,356	6,391,962	242,831,196

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

• **50 Largest Employers in the Shenandoah Valley Region**

1. Valley Health System	26. George's Chicken
2. Wal Mart	27. Trex Company Inc & Subsid
3. James Madison University	28. County of Frederick
4. Frederick County School Board	29. Postal Service
5. Sentara Healthcare	30. Pilgrims Pride Corp
6. Rockingham County School Board	31. Warren County School Board
7. Augusta County School Board	32. City of Harrisonburg
8. Navy Federal Credit Union	33. Shentel Management Company
9. Augusta Medical Center	34. Western State Hospital
10. Target Corp	35. Virginia Military Institute
11. Cargill Meat Solutions	36. Ignite Holdings LLC
12. Food Lion	37. County of Rockingham
13. LSC Communications US, LLC	38. Winchester City Public Schools
14. Lowes' Home Centers, Inc.	39. VDOT
15. U.S. Department of Homeland Defense	40. George's Foods
16. Hershey Chocolate of Virginia	41. AAF McQuay, Inc.
17. Washington and Lee University	42. H.P. Hood, Inc.
18. Shenandoah County School Board	43. Danone North America Public Benefit
19. Martin's Food Market	44. Page County School Board
20. Marshall's	45. City of Winchester
21. Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp	46. U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation
22. Harrisonburg City Public Schools	47. Stellar Management Grouping
23. McKee Foods Corporation	48. Hollister, Inc.
24. Shenandoah University	49. Dynamic Aviation Group
25. The Home Depot	50. Waynesboro School Board

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, *Economic Information & Analytics*, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 2nd Quarter (April, May, June) 2020.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION: We lead Virginia in ensuring a highly skilled and engaged workforce. We integrate workforce development and economic development activities to produce a vibrant economy with unparalleled quality of life.

MISSION: Building partnerships to create workforce opportunities that cultivate business, grow jobs, develop people, and build community.

VALUE

PROPOSITION: ***For Individuals/Jobseekers:*** We provide an excellent service experience to help you connect to work and learning opportunities and supports for future success.

For Employers: We provide an excellent service experience connecting your business to current and future workforce talent.

CUSTOMERS: Our *primary external customers* are **employers and jobseekers (emerging and transitional)**.

Our primary *internal customers* are **corporate board staff, center staff, volunteers, and our partners**.

ROLE: The Workforce Development Board will play several roles in furtherance of our vision and mission:

- We seek to **catalyze change** in the community to build effective partnerships.
- We will **act as a convener** of stakeholders and elected leaders across political boundaries.
- We will be **strong collaborators** and take an active role promoting collaboration.
- We will **strategically invest** in program innovation.
- We will be **advocates** for systems change.

ORGANIZATIONAL CORE VALUES

Our Common Values:

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

COMMUNITY. We value the diversity, shared values, and common perspectives of the community we work with to engage in joint action.

COLLABORATION. We value the strengths of our community partners and collaborate to ensure effective and efficient service delivery.

INNOVATION. We step beyond traditional thinking by using creativity to design workforce initiatives and solve problems.

TRANSPARENCY. We embody honesty and open communication as the culture of our organization and how we interact with our constituencies.

INTEGRITY. We act honestly, ethically, and fairly.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Strategy 2021

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES for July 2021 through December 2022

- Develop and deliver workforce services to individuals who are underemployed², underrepresented and/or underserved to expand the talent pipeline of youth and adults.
- Create a collective impact strategy to influence the labor force participation rate in the region.
- Create a collective impact strategy to promote family sustaining wages.

STRATEGIC GOALS and KEY OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives support the Shenandoah Valley WDB in accomplishing the priorities set for the next eighteen months.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Build Awareness and Identity of the WDB and the Workforce System's Opportunities and Supports

Key Strategies:

- 1.1. Develop a communication plan with simple messages about the benefits of participating in the workforce development system³, with a focus on intentional outreach to the underemployed, underrepresented, and underserved.
- 1.2. Within the plan, identify key advertising and recruiting channels and advertise the workforce system as a bridge between business, people looking for jobs, training, and jobs.
- 1.3. Ensure consistent messaging across the region about the system's services and how to access them.
- 1.4. Expand the system's footprint to ensure the SVWDB is reaching out to small and medium size businesses not already aware of the workforce system and the SVWDB.

Outcome(s):

- Increase the number of first-time users of the networks' services, both jobseekers and businesses by X% (or X number).
- Increase the number of small and medium businesses using workforce system services by X% (or X number).
- Increase the number of individuals identified as underemployed, underrepresented, and underserved using the networks' services by X% (or X number).

² For the purposes of this plan, the underemployed are defined as the Virginia 2020 ALICE Report defines them: an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE represents 'the growing number of households in our communities that do not earn enough to afford basic necessities'.

³ The workforce development **system** is broader than the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded programs. The system encompasses **all** the organizations, programs, and activities that prepare people for employment, help individuals advance in their careers, and ensure a skilled workforce.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Create, Support and Sustain a Talent Pipeline for SVWDB's Targeted Industries

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Assist businesses to develop new methods to expand recruitment and retain their current workforce, including how to provide supports with issues that impact a worker's ability to get to work and stay at work.
- 2.2 Continue to support the Business Solutions Team in collaborating and continuously improving coordination of services to employers.
- 2.3 Advocate with economic development and other key partners to develop the community eco-systems that will keep potential workers in the region and attract people to come to the area to live and work.
- 2.4 Create methods to engage with individual businesses and groups of businesses with similar needs to provide ongoing support.
- 2.5 Articulate for businesses the paradigm shifts that are taking place about how people work and the workplace (i.e., support services for workers; longer term retention strategies; managing telework; work/life balance expectations of younger workers).
- 2.6 Define a standard family sustaining wage for the region and/or each of the subregions.
- 2.7 Ensure cultural responsiveness in how services are designed and delivered.
- 2.8 Connect individuals to training and a system of wrap around services that is responsive to their diverse experience and needs.
- 2.9 Maximize the efforts to collaborate and coordinate across the region.

Outcome(s):

- Increase the number of individuals obtaining jobs at a self or family sustaining wage by X% (or by X number).
- Increase the number of businesses that report that the workforce system consistently supplies the talent they need by X% (or X number).
- Increase customer satisfaction by X%.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Implement a system-wide approach to developing the essential work ready skills⁴ and executive functioning skills⁵ employers require for the current and future workplace.

Key Objectives:

- 3.1 Confirm the competencies employers categorize as work ready by creating a list based on local feedback from employers and national research on the skills required for the future workplace.
- 3.2 Validate the competencies with local employers within each targeted industry.
- 3.3. Upon local employer validation, convene partners to ensure that the essential skills/competencies are a focus of their employability training programs and that they are using curriculum aligned to teaching the skills.

⁴ Workplace readiness skills ensure workers have the basic academic, critical thinking and personal skills necessary to maintain employment.

⁵ Executive functioning skills facilitate the behaviors required to plan and achieve goals. The fundamental skills related to executive function include proficiency in adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, working memory, time management, and organization.

- 3.4 As part of the communication plan developed in strategy 1.1, communicate the skills that are being taught in response to the skills required for the workplace.
- 3.5 Develop a coordinated and accessible infrastructure to connect individuals to the training opportunities to develop these skills.

Outcome(s):

- Set the expectation for all partners to integrate the skills employers identified as ‘essential workplace skills’ into their employability development programs.
- X% (or X number) of individuals in employability programs obtain the skills.
- Employers within the targeted industries report that they are aware that these skills are being taught throughout the workforce system.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following principles define the way the organization operates with regard to the goals and strategies identified. The core processes employed by the organization to accomplish the goals will operate in the following fashion:

- Make it easy for customers to do business with us and for us to work together.
- Collaborate to build strategic alliances around our goals, strategies, and tasks in which we are engaged.
- Align and maximize all resources required to carry out the strategic initiatives and seek to increase resources as required to achieve our mission.
- Deliver service excellence through our products, processes, and services.
- Create value by continuously assessing the outcomes and appropriateness of programs and delivery systems for which we will hold ourselves accountable.
- Optimize and automate, ensuring process effectiveness and usefulness and then employ technology where appropriate.
- Demonstrate responsiveness to all the region’s subregions and their diversity.
- Continuously strengthen organizational effectiveness and build capacity.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities

TDD: VA Relay Center: 711 or 800.828.1120

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