



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER TWENTY THREE

ESTABLISHING THE NEW VIRGINIA ECONOMY WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

Importance of the Initiative

With its favorable economic climate, quality of life, regulatory environment, and low unemployment rate, Virginia has been designated as the best state for business. Also named the Best State for STEM Jobs, Virginia has the highest concentration of high tech jobs per capita in the nation. In light of these positive factors, it is critical to prepare for changes to Virginia's employment marketplace and retiring workforce.

A new workforce agenda is required to fill jobs of today and the future. Based on current estimates, by 2022, about 500,000 new jobs will be created in Virginia. Over 930,000 workers will be needed to replace Virginia's retiring workforce. Many of these jobs will be in scientific, technical, or healthcare careers, and will require postsecondary education or workforce credentials. Careers in these fields are readily accessible for those who are trained, credentialed, and ready to work. However, we do not have enough tech-savvy frontline workers.

The Commonwealth must devise a long-term, comprehensive plan to equip our workforce with in-demand skill sets that will retain and attract businesses. It is crucial for enough students to graduate from Virginia's educational institutions to meet the demands from current and prospective employers. Employers must be engaged to determine current and future employment needs.

As Chief Executive Officer and Chief Workforce Development Officer for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and in furtherance of my commitment to workforce development and training, I am dedicated to ensuring that all Virginians are afforded access to a world class education and workforce system. Therefore, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Chief Workforce Development Advisor, I am directing Virginia's Workforce Development System ("Workforce System"), including the Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Virginia Community College System, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Employment Commission,

Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Social Services, as well as the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, local Workforce Investment Boards (“WIBs”), and other state agencies as identified below to take immediate action to marshal the Commonwealth’s education and training resources.

Establishment of the Initiative

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby create Establishing the New Virginia Economy Workforce Initiative.

Actions to Drive Virginia’s Workforce System

This Executive Order requires Virginia’s Workforce System to take the following immediate actions:

1. Establish annual goals and identify opportunities to increase statewide attainment rates of credentials that align with employer needs.

Specialized, skilled, and technical jobs at the technician level currently comprise about 45% of Virginia’s labor market. The required training for these jobs is usually acquired through community college degrees, certificate programs, apprenticeships, certifications, licenses, or other career-related credentials. As the demand for new workers with specialized skills increases, the Commonwealth must act quickly to address industry needs, fill the workforce gap, and foster new opportunities.

- “Pathway to 50K” – Virginia will set a goal of attaining 50,000 STEM-H credentials, licenses, apprenticeships, and associate degrees that meet the immediate workforce needs during my administration. Many of these jobs will have high individual wages and bring a substantial return on investment to the gross state product.
- Action Item: By October 31, 2014, state agencies including the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Social Services, Virginia Community College System, and local WIBs must each produce a report for the Secretary of Commerce and Trade that will incorporate the current workforce credential attainment levels from FY2013, and regional business and industry needs. After reviewing the baseline data, each agency and WIB will establish an annual goal and strategies for the next three years to increase attainments rates and identify barriers to credential attainment to meet the Governor’s goal of 50,000 credentials. The reports must also identify opportunities to take immediate action for changing state policies, funding, or applying for federal waivers to increase credential rates. In addition, local WIBs will work with local businesses and industry sectors, local chambers of commerce, and local community colleges to identify and prioritize those workforce credentials most in demand by employers in the WIBs’ regions. Transparency of credential attainment will be provided by an online Commonwealth Scorecard of Economic Opportunity that will be hosted by the State Council for Higher Education of Virginia.

- Action Item: By December 31, 2014, the Secretary of Commerce and Trade will approve a plan for implementing new statewide common metrics and methods of measuring postsecondary education/workforce credential attainment, employment, wages, professional mobility, and return on investment. Currently, the only established performance metrics for most of Virginia's publicly funded workforce programs are those from various federal agencies. To better align Virginia's workforce programs with a common goal of continued economic development, the state will, for the first time, introduce common performance metrics for all publicly funded workforce programs.
2. Create seamless transitions for Virginia's veterans by providing high quality education and workforce services that accelerate career opportunities.

At present, over 840,000 veterans reside in Virginia. Since 2000, Virginia has had high growth in its veteran population, and, more specifically, those veterans under the age of 25. With a strong military presence, defense activities, and civilian contractors, Virginia is a leader of veteran employment strategies through the Department of Veterans Services' Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program. V3 educates employers to recruit, hire, and retain veterans. However, more resources and services are needed to enhance this program. In addition, actual skill sets and academic transcripts must be quickly evaluated for transferability. Virginia must take a multifaceted approach to building a comprehensive veteran workforce services initiative.

- "Our Patriot Pledge" - Virginia will request that 10,000 businesses sign pledges of commitment for hiring our veterans. In addition, by the end of the administration, Virginia will double the number of veterans hired through the V3 program.
 - Action Item: By November 30, 2014, the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, in consultation with Virginia's Workforce System, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, the Department of Veterans Services, and each of the education and workforce development agencies and programs within Virginia's Workforce System will present a plan to the Governor on how to recruit and retain veterans in Virginia. The plan will outline how Virginia will convert military experience and training into academic or workforce credentials, simplify and accelerate the education and workforce credentialing process toward a career, create online portals with information and services that support the transition process, and build an awareness of careers and services that Virginia offers as the preeminent state for veterans.
3. Diversify the economy by providing workers with skills to meet new private sector needs, encouraging innovation through entrepreneurship, retooling regions for economic advancement, and educating Virginia's workforce for the future.

Roughly thirty percent of Virginia's economy is tied to the federal government. Virginia needs to strengthen its economy by encouraging the growth of robust industry sectors that do not rely on government contracting or grant funding.

- "A Diversified Dominion" - Virginia will seek to diversify the economy by increasing support for small businesses, start-ups, entrepreneurial ventures, and patent production.

The Commonwealth can help advance current industries, while recruiting new ones to maintain our global strength.

- Action Item: The Secretary of Commerce and Trade will work closely with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, state and local chambers of commerce, trade associations, and Virginia's Workforce System to set a vision for Virginia's future economy. Local, state, and national business trends and forecasts will be evaluated to help shape next steps to retain Virginia's current and future competitive edge. These short-term and long-term goals, recommendations, and strategies will be submitted in a report to the Governor's Office by no later than December 1, 2014.
4. Align workforce supply to current and anticipated employer demands by constructing career pathways and training solutions for the dislocated, underemployed, and future worker.

Virginia will align its workforce supply to current and anticipated employer demands by constructing career pathways and training solutions for the dislocated, underemployed, and future worker. Currently, tens of thousands of jobs are left unfilled in Virginia due to the creation of new jobs and positions available from the recently retired. In Virginia's metropolitan areas, job vacancies for highly skilled and high tech workers average over a month to fill, while a single job in rural Virginia might garner hundreds of applications. Education attainment requirements also differ from industry to industry and can be regionally specific.

- "Real-Time Resources" – Virginia will create the Commonwealth Consortium for Advanced Research and Statistics (CCARS) for workforce and education policy. CCARS will support education and workforce entities through analysis and research to help drive economic development in the Commonwealth. This consortium will provide real-time data about human capital, regional skills gaps, local and state wage data, university research and talent, and availability of local and state workforce programs. The availability of data will increase outcomes-based decision-making which will help create effective and efficient strategies for employment development and job replacement, as well as streamline and target resources. The Secretary of Commerce and Trade will convene a CCARS conference at least once a year.
- Action Item: To better assess and take action regarding regional and state skills gaps in key occupations and industry sectors, the Virginia Employment Commission, in partnership with the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and Virginia's Workforce System, will develop an online dashboard that integrates regional and statewide information about the supply of workforce credentials, as well as information about college degrees, and other academic credentials.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing, and shall remain in full force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 13th day of August, 2014.



Terence R. McAuliffe, Governor

Attest:

Levar M. Stoney, Secretary of the Commonwealth