



Region 8

Cities of: Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, & Winchester
Counties of: Augusta, Bath, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, & Warren

Meeting summary for Talent Pipeline Initiative Ad-Hoc GoVaR8 Committee (01/15/2025)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on the progress of the Talent Pathways Initiative and the Growth and Diversification plan, with discussions on data collection, employer roundtables, and the importance of sector partnerships. The team also explored the challenges of scheduling events in the southern part of the region and the need for a more comprehensive evaluation of the support system for various industry sectors. The conversation ended with discussions on the need for actionable recommendations supported by data, the importance of considering professional services, and the potential for attracting more employees from surrounding areas.

Next steps

- All committee members to review participant list and identify gaps in representation.
- All committee members to research and share promising practices for attracting and retaining employees in manufacturing, transportation, and logistics industries.
- Jeremy to share summaries from previous employer focus groups and interviews conducted for the comprehensive economic development strategy.
- Sharon to contact Tracy for an interview.
- Sharon to reach out to Virginia Manufacturers Association for data and insights.
- Sharon to provide committee with materials to review one week before the next meeting.
- Sharon to draft template for final deliverable and share with committee for review.
- Sharon to drill down on commuter data, including types of jobs and specific geographic areas.
- Tracy to provide recommendations for additional employers to interview and share ideas on workforce practices.

- Sharon to consider scheduling Work Ed representatives for a future meeting to discuss commuting patterns and industry data.

Summary

New Committee Members and Plans Discussed

In the meeting, Alison welcomed everyone and introduced the new members of the committee, including Jeremy, Tracy, and Eric. Sharon, the CEO of the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Board, explained her role in the project, emphasizing the importance of data collection and qualitative analysis. Jeremy, representing the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, expressed his team's interest in updating the Go Virginia region 8 growth and diversification plan, aiming to incorporate the work of the Talent Pathways Initiative. Tracy, a senior HR manager at Torre Plastics, shared her excitement about joining the Go Virginia advisory board and her background in HR. Eric, the division superintendent for Augusta County schools, announced his retirement and expressed his commitment to the project. Alison ended the conversation by mentioning that she had sent a large amount of documents to the team for review.

Talent Pipeline Process and Challenges

Alison and Sharon discussed the progress of their initiative to identify gaps in the talent pipeline process, focusing on manufacturing, transportation, and logistics. They highlighted the importance of the contract between their entities, the PowerPoint presentation used with the workforce board, and the participant list document. Sharon then took over, explaining that they had conducted six months of work, including employer roundtables, individual employer interviews, and interviews with other stakeholders. She also mentioned the challenges faced in scheduling events in the southern part of the region due to a lack of employer interest. The next steps were not explicitly stated in the transcript.

Workforce Board Project and Connections

Sharon discussed the ongoing project with the Workforce Board and localities, focusing on economic development and business solutions. She mentioned the use of trusted connections with individuals who already have relationships with employers to avoid cold calls or misunderstood communications. Sharon also highlighted the importance of reaching out to key individuals and stakeholders in the region, such as Interchange and Dynamic Aviation, and addressing any gaps in the list of participants. She mentioned her collaboration with Debbie Melvin, Jay Langston, and Patrick Barker, as well as the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement. Alison raised questions about

the involvement of local delegates in the project, to which Sharon responded that they could be reached through the Commissioner.

Shenandoah Valley Partnership and VEDP Discussion

Alison and Sharon discussed the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). They noted that the VEDP had not supplied them with a list of priority companies in their region, but Sharon suggested reaching out to the VEDP for this information. They also discussed the importance of identifying top employers and the potential alignment with the Virginia Employment Commission's list. Sharon mentioned the need to gather regional, state, and national promising practices that align with emerging themes, including sector partnership models. Alison brought up the topic of grant programs and exposing K-12 students to various career opportunities through tech-related programs.

Evaluating Support System for Industries

Alison and Eric discussed the need for a more comprehensive evaluation of the support system for various industry sectors, with Eric expressing his willingness to contribute and provide necessary information. Sharon then highlighted the importance of a provider network to connect with diverse talent pipelines and support existing employees facing life issues. She emphasized the need to include the community services provider network as a stakeholder in the project and leverage their resources for grant applications. The discussion also touched on the potential benefits of the provider network in retaining workers and addressing barriers to employment.

Talent Pathway Initiative and G&D Plan

Sharon discussed the progress of the Talent Pathway Initiative (TPI) and its alignment with the Growth and Diversification (G&D) plan. She mentioned the initiative's focus on manufacturing, transportation, and logistics sectors, and its potential to complement other regional initiatives. Sharon also highlighted the emerging health services initiative across all 9 Go Virginia regions, which she is working on with a small group of individuals. Alison suggested identifying gaps in the list of organizations and associations, and Sharon agreed to reach out to the Virginia Manufacturers Association (VMA) for potential data. The committee also discussed the need to present the data effectively and Sharon mentioned three emerging themes from the data collected from employers: the establishment of sector partnerships, the preference for flexible work-based learning opportunities, and the potential for work-based learning initiatives to train large numbers of individuals.

Career Pathways Committee Progress

In the meeting, Alison and Sharon discussed the progress of the committee tasked with developing career pathways and defining job roles. Sharon mentioned that the committee would meet monthly until June and would present data collected so far at each meeting. Alison suggested that Sharon document the committee's tasks and send them to the committee for review. Sharon also expressed interest in interviewing Tracy, a large employer in the northern part of the valley, and Jeremy offered to share feedback from focus groups and interviews conducted in the southern region. The committee agreed to aim for one-hour meetings, with agendas and materials sent out a week before each meeting. The final deliverable was discussed, with Sharon emphasizing the need for actionable recommendations supported by data.

Exploring Commute Data and Workforce

Alison, Sharon, Tracy, and Jeremy discussed the need to drill down on data regarding the number of people commuting outside the Shenandoah Valley for employment, focusing on the types of jobs they are commuting to and where they are going. Tracy suggested exploring why people are commuting outside and the potential cost savings of not having long commutes. Alison highlighted the importance of considering professional services and the potential for attracting more employees from surrounding areas like West Virginia. Sharon assured Tracy that more information would be provided as the project outline is developed. The team also discussed the possibility of Tracy attending Workforce Development Board meetings, which Sharon will be running.