



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

November 30, 2009

Dear Members of the Virginia General Assembly:

On behalf of the Virginia State Leaders Innovation Institute to Expand Employment for Adults with Disabilities, I share with you the Final Report of the Governor's Forum on Disability and Economic Development. The Forum was held in collaboration with the Virginia Economic Development Association on September 15- 16, 2009 at the Hotel Roanoke. This invitation-only event of 90 participants was represented by employers, workforce and economic development professionals and the disability and rehabilitation communities. The outcome of this two-day event was the creation of the *Virginia's Call to Action* Final Report. The report outlines the goals, objectives and strategies developed to increase the employment of persons with disabilities in the Commonwealth. I will look forward to working with you on this important issue to implement the strategies and outcomes.

Thank you for your support and if you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (804) 371-2666 or by email at Ed.Turner@governor.virginia.gov.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Turner".

Ed Turner, Special Advisor to the Governor on Disability Issues in the Workforce and Chair,
Virginia State Leaders Innovation to Expand Employment for Adults with Disabilities

**The Governor's Forum on Disability
and Economic Development**

Virginia's Call to Action

Final Report



Prepared by the

**Virginia State Leaders Innovation Institute
to Expand Employment for Adults with Disabilities**

November 2009

Executive Summary

The Governor's Forum on Disability and Economic development was held on September 15 and 16, 2009 in Roanoke, Virginia. The Forum, an invitation-only event attended by over 90 participants, was designed to facilitate collaboration among members of the business, economic development, workforce development, disability and rehabilitation communities who have a positive vision for citizens with disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The expectation was that the participants in this Forum would help develop a plan to increase employment opportunities for Virginians with disabilities.

The stated purposes of the Forum were to:

- Determine how to create, and tap into opportunities to prepare persons with disabilities to develop the skill sets to meet the employment needs of existing industries, industry clusters, and emerging industries.
- Determine how to be a catalyst for creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities utilizing the resources of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), its statewide system, and its processes for bringing industry into Virginia.

There were three discussion topics that helped guide the strategy development process:

- Employment Opportunities
- Leveraging Strengths and Resources
- Promising Strategies

At the conclusion to the Forum, the participants had created an overall goal for the strategic plan, along with four objectives and anticipated outcomes connected to those objectives. The participants also developed corresponding strategies and action steps for each objective, which are detailed in the full report.

Overarching Goal:

Create a seamless integration of people with disabilities into workforce, economic and business development plans

The 90 Forum participants over two days participated in small groups discussions and created goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes that developed into the “Virginia’s Call to Action” Plan:

Objective # 1

Create seamless systems so that people with disabilities are part of the talent pipeline for existing and emerging occupations.

Anticipated Outcome

People with disabilities are employed through systems integration

Objective # 2

Change community perceptions of people with disabilities

Anticipated Outcome

Communities and employers recognize the value of people with disabilities as employees

Objective # 3

Improve the impact of services for youth and adults

Anticipated Outcome

Children and adults with disabilities reach their full potential

Objective # 4

Leverage local and state policies to increase employability and employment of people with disabilities

Anticipated Outcome

Government structures, operations, and policies fully support employment of people with disabilities

Virginia's Call to Action

Greetings,

For the past couple of years there has been a concerted effort through the Governor's office in Virginia to develop workforce opportunities for persons with disabilities. To further that effort, the Governor created the Office of the Special Advisor on Disability Issues in the Workforce and issued Executive Order # 8 which ordered all state agencies, colleges and universities to examine their hiring policies and to remove any barriers that may prevent the hiring or promotion of qualified applicants/employees with disabilities. Another major initiative of the Office has been the promotion and integration of economic development efforts and the employment potential of persons with disabilities. This Forum was a major step in that effort to bring key actors from different groups and interests together.

The Governor's Forum, hosted by Governor Timothy Kaine, was funded through a grant from the National Technical Assistance and Research Center (NTAR) to Promote Leadership for Increasing the Employment and Economic Independence of Adults with Disabilities. The NTAR Center is located in the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University.

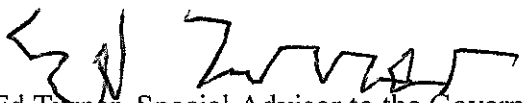
The Forum was an invitation-only event designed to facilitate collaboration among members of the business, economic development, workforce development, disability and rehabilitation communities who have a positive vision for citizens with disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Governor anticipated that this Forum would help develop a plan to increase employment opportunities for Virginians with disabilities.

The stated purposes of the Forum were to:

- Determine how to create, and tap into opportunities to prepare persons with disabilities to develop the skill sets to meet the employment needs of existing industries, industry clusters, and emerging industries.
- Determine how to be a catalyst for creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities utilizing the resources of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), its statewide system, and its processes for bringing industry into Virginia.

Therefore, the success of this Forum would not have been possible without the support of Governor Kaine, NTAR, the Virginia State Leaders Team, the diverse organizations, employers and individuals who provided their insight and perspectives that developed the *Virginia's Call to Action* Final Report.

With warmest regards,



Ed Turner, Special Advisor to the Governor for Disability Issues in the Workforce and Chair, Virginia State Leaders Innovation Institute to Expand Employment for Adults with Disabilities

The Governor's Forum on Disability and Economic Development

The Forum was attended by over 90 invited participants from across the spectrum connected to disability, workforce, and economic development concerns. Presentations were made by the Senior Advisor to the Governor for Workforce, the Executive Director of the National Council on Disability, the President of the Virginia Economic Developer's Association, the Human Resource Manager and ADA Coordinator for Northrop Grumman, and the Chair of the Virginia Workforce Council and Director of Education and Workforce Development, Northrop Grumman. There was also a panel discussion on "Developing a Common Language" that included assistant commissioners and Directors from state agencies and the education community.

Discussions were facilitated in breakout sessions on three topics that led to a strategy brainstorming report. The three discussion topics that guided the strategy developed were:

1. Employment Opportunities

- Identify Virginia's greatest strengths in creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Identify activities occurring within the workforce and economic development systems that could be built upon to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

2. Leveraging Strengths and Resources

- Leverage the strengths of people with disabilities and the workforce/economic development systems to:
 - Create employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
 - Expand the pool of qualified applicants who are ready and willing to work for relocating companies and new businesses.

3. Promising Strategies

Virginia's Call to Action: Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Overarching Goal:

Create a seamless integration of people with disabilities into workforce, economic and business development plans

At the conclusion of the two-day Forum, the participants identified four main objectives and anticipated outcomes. Specific strategies were developed for each objective and outcome, along with implementable action steps.

Objective # 1

Create seamless systems so that people with disabilities are part of the talent pipeline for existing and emerging occupations.

Anticipated Outcome

People with disabilities are employed through systems integration

Strategy 1.1

Develop a single place and point of contact to serve all communities, including persons with disabilities

- Simplify access at the front-end so people with disabilities can be part of the talent-pipeline
- Create a single, current and comprehensive database for all qualified applicants throughout the Commonwealth

Strategy 1.2

Increase the capacity of the "One-Stop Career Centers," local workforce investment boards (WIBS)

- Develop a consistent message, branding and information
- Create a case for linking workforce development, economic developers and employers
- Ensure One-Stop staff are familiar with and properly refer to programs and services available to all constituents
- Develop the capacity of the One-Stops to serve as a clearinghouse and to be viewed as the "go to" resource in the community
- Place benefits counselors in One-Stops to assist disabled job seekers to understand the Social Security Administration (SSA) work incentives.

- Develop relationships between the One-Stops and the Work Incentive Specialist Advocates (WISAs) to educate disabled job seekers.
- Increase Workforce Investment Act (WIA) incentive funds to local WIBs to engage them more effectively with business and industries

Strategy 1.3

Expand the Virginia Workforce Network (VWN)

- Create a consistent format for accessing services
- Invite employers to understand the role and function of the VWN
- Enhance networking among various agencies to build trust and create referral streams within the Comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers and the VWN.

Strategy 1.4

Create a “shared” information tool for all state employees to get information about the myriad of programs and services available to support the workforce delivery system

- Build on Virginia 2-1-1’s 24-hour access and web-based services
- Create a process in which the owner of information ensures it is current and accurate
- Create a system that Includes all agency-specific forms to ensure consistency with referrals
- Create a universal intake form for collecting basic information
- Include success stories and best practices

Objective # 2

Change community perceptions of people with disabilities

Anticipated Outcome

Communities and employers recognize the value of people with disabilities as employees

Strategy 2.1

Identify people with disabilities as an asset without focusing on their disability

- Share success stories, models and best practices in the field
- Develop a strategic plan that will identify the strategies and the actions needed to achieve success
- Contact employers who have developed plans of action; identify what they are doing that has created success; and replicate.

Strategy 2.2

Identify a brand or message that can be shared across all communities

- Present a unified message and speak with one voice
- Identify a message/brand and share the message around an identified goal
- Identify stakeholders to develop a statement that all groups can buy into
- Determine how to deliver the message consistently and effectively

Objective # 3

Improve the impact of services for youth and adults

Anticipated Outcome

Children and adults with disabilities reach their full potential

Strategy 3.1

Increase success of youth with disabilities transitioning to self-sufficiency as adults

- Expand the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) program to provide transition services to all students
- Expand the career pathway program to all students (regardless of a disability) and integrate it into middle schools across the Commonwealth
- Expand Career Coaches Program statewide to encourage career pathways planning and the establishment of training and credential goals that will lead to employment.

Strategy 3.2

Increase awareness and use of Assistive-Technology

- Identify creative ways for students to keep their assistive-technology once they graduate from secondary school
- Increase awareness of the available assistive-technologies for youth, families, teachers, and other adults who work with transitioning youth

Strategy 3.3

Increase access to mentoring programs for disabled youth and parents

- Support mentoring programs in elementary school
- Encourage older disabled youth to mentor younger disabled children and youth
- Support parents with older disabled youth to become mentors to parents with younger disabled children and youth to assist with breaking the cycle of enabling

Objective # 4

Leverage local and state policies to increase employability and employment of people with disabilities

Anticipated Outcome

Government structures, operations, and policies fully support employment of people with disabilities

Strategy 4.1

Establish the Special Advisor on Disability Issues in the Workforce as a permanent position in state government.

Strategy 4.2

Establish resources to support the Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) as a priority in the One-Stop Career Centers.

- Develop methods to promote and place value on the DPNs contributions to the workforce delivery system
- Establish local and state agency funding partnerships and leveraging of funds to support the DPNs prior to the ending of the Federal funding.
- Bring together stake-holders at the local and state levels interested in sustaining the DPNs to develop strategies

Strategy 4.3

Explore policy options to support people with disabilities and those who employ them

- Increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities by expanding the categories of eligibility for the Small, Women, and Minority (SWAM) owned businesses to allow non-profit organizations to compete.
- Increase long-term support systems that will assist people with disabilities to maintain their employment.
- Review policies across local and state level systems to identify areas of inconsistency, lack of coordination and opportunities for collaboration

Additional strategies will seek to:

- Enlist the support of the Virginia Workforce Council
- Enlist the support of untapped state-level agency and legislative leaders to develop policies and strategies that will facilitate the collaboration between the employment of persons with disabilities and existing and emerging occupations.

In conclusion, there were many individuals and organizations that played a significant role in both setting the stage and for making this endeavor possible; we thank them for their commitment to the process, planning and participating in the Forum. For additional information, contact:

Ed Turner
(804) 371-2666

Ed.Turner@governor.virginia.gov

Kathy Thompson
(804) 819-1681

kthompson@vccs.edu

Virginia State Leaders Innovation Institute to Expand Employment for Adults with Disabilities, 2008-2009

Ed Turner, Chair, Special Advisor to the Governor for Disability Issues in the Workforce, Office of the Governor

Joseph Ashley, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services

Anne Atkins, Director of Communications, Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs

Robert Burton, Deputy Commissioner, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

J. Howard Green, Business Liaison, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University

Jack Quigley, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Project Manager, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

Daniel LeBlanc, Senior Advisor to the Governor for Workforce, Office of the Governor

Katherine McCary, Vice President, Sun Trust Bank

Elizabeth Povar, Director of Business Development, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Debra Rhu, President, TecAccess

Kathy Thompson, Ph.D., Senior Workforce Analyst, Virginia Community College System

The Forum facilitation, funding and planning were provided by:

Facilitation:

Wholonomy Consulting, LLC
P. O. Box 42035
Tucson, AZ 85733
(520) 403-0687
Contact: Cassandra O'Neill
cassandraoneill@comcast.net
www.wholonomyconsulting.com

Funding:

Kathy Krepcio, Director
NTAR Leadership Center
John Heldrich Center for Workforce
Development
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
30 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 932-4100, Ext. 6306
Krepcio@rci.rutgers.edu

Planning and Logistics:

Coffey Consulting, LLC
4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 1050
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 907-0900
(301) 907-2925 (Fax)
Contact: Stephen Kornblatt
skornblatt@coffeyconsultingllc.com
www.coffeyconsultingllc.com

The Governor's Forum on Disability and Economic Development
September 15 – 16, 2009
The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Roanoke, Virginia

AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday, September 15, 2009 – Roanoke Ballroom C & D

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Registration**

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **OPENING SESSION – Creating Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities: Governor Timothy Kaine's Perspective**

Presenters:

- **Daniel LeBlanc**, Senior Advisor to Governor Kaine for Workforce
- **Ed Turner**, Special Advisor to Governor Kaine on Disability Issues for Workforce

2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **Break**

2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. **PLENARY – The National Agenda on Disability and Employment**

Presenter: **Mike Collins**, Executive Director, National Council on Disability

2:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. **PANEL DISCUSSION – Developing a Common Language**
Moderator: **Anthony Mallon, Ph.D.**, Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work

Panelists:

- **Shelby Robinson**, Assistant Commissioner, Virginia Employment Commission
- **Joseph Ashley, Ph.D.**, Assistant Commissioner, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
- **Debbie Melvin**, Project Manager, Virginia Jobs Investment Program, Virginia Department of Business Assistance
- **Virginia J. Reilly, Ph.D.**, Director, University ADA Services
- **Christina Lowe**, Human Resources, Virginia Tech University
- **Ed Turner**, Special Advisor to Governor Kaine on Disability Issues for Workforce

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. **RECEPTION – Crystal Ballroom A-C**
Invited Guests: Gubernatorial candidates Honorable Creigh Deeds and Honorable Robert McDonnell

Day 2: Wednesday, September 16, 2009 – Roanoke Ballroom C & D

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **PLENARY – Making the Case: Businesses and the Employment of Persons with Disabilities**
Matthew James, President, Virginia Economic Developer’s Association

Presenter: **Bob Vetere**, Human Resources Manager and ADA Coordinator, Northrop Grumman

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **OVERVIEW OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS**
Lead Facilitator: **Cassandra O’Neill**, Senior Partner, Wholonomy Consulting

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**
Breakout Room 1 – Roanoke Ballroom G
Breakout Room 2 – Roanoke Ballroom H
Breakout Room 3 – Buck Mountain
Breakout Room 4 – Mill Mountain

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Lunch (provided) – Roanoke Ballroom C & D**

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **GROUP REPORTS – Cassandra O’Neill**

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **STRATEGY BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. **Break**

3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **GROUP REPORTS – Roanoke Ballroom C & D**
Cassandra O’Neill

3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. **CLOSING SESSION – Leveraging Talent: Connecting Economic Development and the Employment of Persons with Disabilities**
Presenter: **Robert Leber, Ph.D.**, Chair, Virginia Workforce Council and Director, Education and Workforce Development, Northrop Grumman Corporation