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The Honorable Timothy Kaine
Governor's Office
Patrick Henry Building, Third Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Kaine:

In accordance with §2.2-2674.01 of the Code of Virginia, it is my distinct pleasure to transmit to you on behalf of the Virginia Workforce Council, a report of initial outcomes on the Virginia Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) Program.

We have made considerable progress and are poised to reach even higher. A total of 4267 CRCs were achieved in fiscal year 2008, which represents a 33% increase over fiscal year 2007. In his Workforce Development Strategic Plan, the Governor set a goal to increase CRCs by 10 percent annually, the 2008 General Assembly approved legislation establishing the CRC in the Virginia Code authorizing funding to support it, and the Virginia Workforce Council set aside \$250,000 in seed money from federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Governor's Discretionary funds with those resources being matched by other resources and in-kind contributions.

In order to sustain the progress we have made and to elevate the profile of the CRC, we recommend that the Governor and General Assembly provide \$100,000 in FY 2010 from the General Fund to further bolster these efforts underway. Future general fund appropriations will be needed to build upon the federal seed funding.

We welcome your feedback and support in the coming months.

Yours truly,

Dr. Robert P. Leber
Chairman, Virginia Workforce Council

RPL:psd

Cc: The Honorable Terry Kilgore, Chair, House Committee on Commerce and Labor
The Honorable Robert Tata, Chair, House Committee on Education
The Honorable Richard Saslaw, Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor
The Honorable Edward Houck, Chair, Senate Committee on Education and Health

Enclosure: Career Readiness Certificate Program

Virginia Career Readiness Certificate
Project Status
December 1, 2008

In January 2008, the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC) voted to adopt the attainment of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) as a state performance measure for the Workforce Investment Boards. This measure was incorporated into the Incentive Awards process on July 1, 2008 and requires CRC attainment for at least 5 percent of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Older Youth participants served. The VWC Business Services Committee set aside \$22,250 to support the efforts of the Workforce Investment Boards to increase their use of the CRC.

The basis for the CRC program is the ACT-developed skill database, which contains over 15,000 detailed job profiles, representing one of the largest in existence today. These profiles were produced by ACT-trained profilers to analyze each job with the help of subject matter experts - employees already doing the job successfully and their management - to define the tasks and skills needed to perform the job successfully. By matching the job profile information with individual scores on the WorkKeys® assessments, employers are equipped to make reliable decisions about hiring, training, and program development needs.

As required by the CRC legislation passed during the 2008 General Assembly session, the Virginia Workforce Council adopted a budget allocating funds to develop outreach, marketing, and incentive activities to enhance and expand Virginia's CRC program. In June 2008, the Council approved a budget that allocated \$250,000 from federal Workforce Investment Act funds. These funds were matched by other resources and in-kind contributions. Since the legislation was approved, the program has already seen a significant increase in activity. In FY 2008, Virginia awarded nearly 4,300 CRCs, which was a 33 percent increase over the previous year.

The Virginia Community College System has contracted with the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA), which is the workforce development partnership of J. Sargeant Reynolds and John Tyler Community Colleges, to provide leadership for the CRC initiative. A Memorandum of Understanding outlining the responsibilities of CCWA has been drafted and is pending signature. The activities planned under this MOU will focus on marketing, remediation, and monitoring of performance, in an effort to stimulate additional growth for Virginia's CRC program.

CCWA has received approval from the Governor's Chief of Staff for Governor Kaine to create a public service announcement for the CRC. This announcement will be used in a marketing campaign, which is projected to begin in February 2009. Negotiations are underway with the National Association of Theatre Owners to run CRC promotions in every affiliated movie theatre in Virginia for a period of one month at the beginning of every movie showing. This will allow approximately 2 million movie-goers throughout the state to learn about the benefits that the CRC provides to both businesses and job-seekers. CCWA is also working with the Department of Business Assistance to

develop a video to promote the CRC. The anticipated completion date for the video is April 2009.

An RFP for a statewide gap-training license has been published with proposal reviews beginning in December. This will provide CRC test-takers with access to remedial tools to improve their test scores. Workforce leaders from Virginia's community colleges and local Workforce Investment Boards were briefed on the planned CRC activities at a joint meeting in September 2008. CCWA will also host a project session on the CRC program during the Virginia community college Hire Education Workforce Conference in December. Training on Express Score and gap-training software is being planned for personnel in One-Stop Centers and community colleges as well.

The Virginia Community College System is contracting with ACT to enable all community colleges to participate as a member of the WorkKeys® Solutions Provider network. This will provide new ways for the schools to build long-term relationships with local employers and meet the needs of both learners and local businesses.

CCWA has begun discussions with the Virginia Electronic Commerce Technology Center (VECTEC) at Christopher Newport University to update and enhance the Virginia CRC Skills Bank. This database provides a tool for employers to search data on the skill levels of Virginia's workforce. In addition to this, VECTEC will revise the CRC website, which provides employers, job-seekers, and workforce professionals with information about the CRC.

As evidenced, the Virginia Workforce Council has achieved much success with its CRC initiative. It is anticipated that this success will continue to grow as the result of the latest activities being planned. In order to sustain this progress, the Virginia Workforce Council has recommended that the Governor and General Assembly provide \$100,000 from the General Fund for FY 2010. These funds will be used to further support statewide CRC efforts, which will enhance the Commonwealth's ability to meet the 10 percent annual CRC increase outlined in the Governor's Workforce Development Strategic Plan. Additional general fund appropriations will be needed to complement the seed funding provided in FY 2009.