



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner

S. Duke Storen
Commissioner

July 15, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor of Virginia

Members, Virginia General Assembly

FROM: S. Duke Storen

SUBJECT: Report on Employment for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Participants
2020

Pursuant to the 2020 Appropriation Act, Item 356 (K), attached is the report on community employment and training programs for TANF participants. Please contact me with any questions.

SDS:kc
Attachment

Implementation of the Employment for TANF Participants Program

June 2020

Report Mandate

Item 356 (K) of the 2020 Appropriations Act

K.5. Community employment and training programs and employment services organizations shall report on annual program performance and outcome measures contained in the memorandum of understanding with the Department of Social Services. The department shall report on the implementation of the programs and any performance and outcome data collected through the memorandum of understanding by June 1 of each year.

Background

In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly, in Item 348 (M) of the budget bill, appropriated \$7,500,000 from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant for FY18 for competitive grants for community employment and training programs designed to move current and former TANF clients and those with incomes 200% or less of the poverty level into meaningful employment with the prospect of a career path and wage growth. Of the appropriation, \$2,000,000 was set aside for competitive grants to be provided by employment services organizations. The projects started in 2018.

In the 2018 Session, the General Assembly added \$3,000,000 for the second year from the TANF block grant to provide for a second round of grants for community employment and training programs. The new funds provide additional resources to expand and enhance evidence-based, innovative types of service delivery efforts to address more fully the needs of the target population prior to their entry into work and during employment. Implementation of these projects began in 2019.

Implementation of the 2018 Projects

Projects were fully staffed and operational by December 31, 2018. Those with experience in operating these types of grants continue to outpace those with little or no experience. However, all grantees have increased work participation.

The following organizations and agencies received grants in 2018:

- City of Charlottesville, Office of Economic Development-The Growing Opportunities (GO) training program is designed to provide training to unemployed and underemployed residents of Charlottesville to help them obtain employment in various industries earning a living wage.

- Career Support Systems, Inc.-Provides services on a statewide basis for people with disabilities and barriers to employment.
- City of Lynchburg-Through its TechHire model, this program provides job seekers with wrap around support services including career aptitude and interests exploration. Enrollees are placed in full-time employment with a local employer who provides 6-8 weeks of training in technical skills. All jobs offer opportunities for career advancement.
- City of Norfolk- Targets qualifying individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders receiving Community Service Board and/or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services to assist them with services to overcome barriers to employment.
- City of Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB) - The purpose of the program is to reduce poverty in Richmond by preparing participants to work in occupations that are both in demand and offer self-sufficient wages. The Center for Workforce Innovation in OCWB is the primary engine to move people out of poverty through direct services.
- Danville Community College- The SCALE UP Program is designed to provide short term in demand industry credentials, interpersonal skills training, and employment search support to ameliorate regional unemployment and underemployment.
- Goodwill of Central and Coastal Virginia- This program is designed to build on the success of the Transition and Employment (TIE) Program by increasing engagement in skill-building work experiences and building career pathways leading to increased wages and promotions.
- Learn to Earn, Inc. - Through its Career Transition Skills Program, Learn to Earn utilizes a partnership network of businesses, education and training providers, and workforce services to increase the number of low-income individuals who are experiencing problems in finding employment due to multiple barriers. Learn to Earn serves Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, Sussex, and Chesterfield.
- Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. - To expand services to TANF recipients with significant barriers to employment residing in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria. Specifically, participants with long-term unemployment, poor job retention, and/or those with 6 months or less remaining before benefits are targeted with the ultimate goal of placement in livable wage employment.
- People Inc. of Virginia- The purpose is to aid the most at-risk individuals to overcome barriers that prevent employment. Training, support and access to resources are provided to help the participant find a job on a career path. This projects serves Bristol, Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, and Washington.
- Portsmouth Department of Social Services- The goal of the “A Step Ahead” program is to address barriers such as poor job retention, low education levels and limited access to the transportation system. The program includes an intensive job readiness component,

including soft skills training, and job placement. The goal is for the participant to become employed for more than 6 months at wages that are 10% above the current minimum wage.

- Rappahannock Community College –The goal is an increase in skills and credential attainment, employment and employment retention, reduction in poverty, and the entry into a career pathway. The program includes educational assessment; career pathways identification and goal setting; skills development and credential attainment; and employment placement and advancement. This project serves the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Essex, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland.
- Rehabilitative Services and Vocational Placement, Inc. - The goal of this program is to provide a collection of services including GED completion; career readiness training; post-secondary educational opportunities; and supported employment services. Vocational Assessment and Vocational Evaluation/Testing will be used to assess skills and abilities, and to develop individual career planning. This project serves Newport News, Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover.
- Shenandoah Valley Social Services- The Medical Outreach and Financial Independence Program (MOFIP) goals are to address medical and mental health needs to help move participants towards employment; to assist with applications for SSI/SSDI, when necessary; and to provide financial literacy programs to assist participants in gaining tools needed to understand economic independence. In addition, community medical and mental health providers will be educated about the program.
- The Improvement Association- This program assists participants from Southside Virginia with pre-employment (soft skills development) and job skills training and/or basic education leading to a GED. Other barriers to employment are addressed including transportation and childcare.
- The SkillSource Group, Inc. - This program serve participants in Fairfax with others coming from Prince William and other areas of the region. SkillSource provides subsidized and unsubsidized employment opportunities resulting in increased skills and increased self-sufficiency through employment. In addition, specific emphasis will be on job placement with a focus on increasing educational attainment and credentials leading to a reduction of dependency on public assistance.

Implementation of the 2019 Projects

The second round of projects are described below:

- Career Support System, Inc. – The purpose of this project is to expand the implementation of a successful service delivery model that has a proven record of community-based employment supports for individuals with complex challenges to employment. This program delivers comprehensive advocacy and support to bolster

employment outcomes and expand levels of interagency coordination, collaboration, and integration of systems and services.

- City of Charlottesville- The Growing Opportunities (GO) program provides training to unemployed and underemployed low-income residents of Charlottesville to facilitate employment in industries earning a living wage leading to self-sufficiency.
- City of Hampton- Resources are leveraged to minimize or remove barriers to employment. Staff will support the customer's specific needs, including a career path and service plan that includes assessments and education focused on employment. A team of customer-centered, outcome focused and community-based staff utilize all systems available to operate a care approach to service delivery.
- City of Lynchburg- Funds are being used to expand the Wealth Building Program which provides a direct link between low-income job seekers and middle/high skill employers. The TechHire model consists of a job seeker being provided with wrap-around services through, for example, a case worker; identifying career aptitude and interests; and placing them in a full-time job with a partner employer.
- City of Martinsville- The goal of the program is to connect low-income participants with resources that improve employment attainment, wages, and retention. Working with numerous community based organizations with significant experience in helping low-income families, participants will be connected with services that will result in improved employment and outcomes. On the job training, support services and job skills training will be offered.
- City of Norfolk- Led by the Community Services Board (NCSB) partnering with the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA), Norfolk Works will provide targeted services to residents of NRHA public housing who are facing behavioral health disorders resulting in employment barriers. An employment support team will be added to the project.
- City of Williamsburg- Working with a partnership between the local departments of social services in Williamsburg, James City County, and York-Poquoson; Virginia Career Works; and Thomas Nelson Community College, training/skills building needs and job retention abilities will be addressed through assessment; a Customer Services Academy (CSA) relevant to all jobs; assistance with training, job placement and job retention; the acquisition of certificates for the CSA; job search support and access to adult education and special education support, as needed.
- Danville Community College- The purpose of the program is to provide participants with enhanced workplace essential skills with an emphasis on a career pathway leading to a living wage. Low-income individuals will be provided high quality workforce credentials and other services and activities to stabilize the individual and enable the person to complete for higher wages and benefits.
- Louise W. Eggleston Center- Funding will support the Collaborative Community Connections (C3) program in the City of Portsmouth. This program provides homeless

individuals with support services to obtain and maintain employment. Help is offered with applications for employment, preparation for interviews, and elimination of barriers to employment. Resources and soft skills training are offered.

- Job Assistance Center, Inc. - Working with local Department of Social Services on the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck, services will be offered to prepare participants for entry into employment with the prospect of maintaining employment that can lead to a career path. Comprehensive assessments, work readiness and life skills training, occupational training and career advancement, job placement and enhanced job retention services are available to eligible clients.
- Literary Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV) - Through its Destination Workforce Program, the LCNV will work with participants in Fairfax, Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church to obtain English language literacy and job skills to enter or advance in the workplace. Targeted, intensive, and customized workforce readiness instruction is offered to help participants get on a fast track to employment.
- Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. - In cooperation with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), local social services agencies and others, this project will provide employment services to Prince William County's eligible participants with disabilities. The program will replicate one offered in Arlington and Alexandria to help screen, identify and provide wrap-around supports to persons of differing abilities. Intensive case management/barrier resolution; employment readiness/life skills training/positive self-esteem development; job placement/follow-up; educational/vocational skills training opportunities; SSI/SSDI application support; and crisis intervention are included.
- MVLE Inc. - Through MVLE Rise Services, three potential tracks have been developed for use in Loudoun County. Participant tracks are determined on information gathered during outreach, intake, screening or assessment. Employment and Training is offered to those job ready, and those requiring vocational/career assessment and/or training services. Medical Case Management is for those requiring assessment and referral to medical services prior to, or instead of, employment. Benefits Planning and SSI Application Support is for those requiring help with SSI/SSDI applications.
- Newport News- Through the Brooks Crossing Innovation and Opportunity Center (BCIOC) flexible and customized education and training services, appropriate assessment, and wrap-around support services will be offered, as needed. Emphasis is placed on obtaining credentials, higher education certificates, and/or degrees that will lead to gainful employment.
- Northern Virginia Family Services- Provides transportation assistance through dependable, road-ready vehicles. Transportation is an essential commodity for families to obtain and maintain employment. Vehicles for Change will manage the acquisition and maintenance, delivery and repair warranty of vehicles. Northern Virginia Family

Services will screen prospective recipients of a vehicle. The award will be used to pay the difference in the cost of the vehicles and what the family is asked to pay.

- NW Works, Inc. - NW Works will provide person-centered, intense case management and employment support to address the unemployment needs in Northern Shenandoah Valley. Referrals will be made by partner agencies and these agencies will assist in providing wrap-around services
- Service Source, Inc.- With its partners, Service Source will provide situational assessments; soft-skills development; job skills training; job analysis; job placement; employment outreach, job development, and expanding access to better jobs; job coaching; internships, practicums, work-studies, and apprenticeships; job follow-up; and job follow along.
- SkillSource Group, Inc. - Funding will be utilized for employment and training services for two targeted populations in Fairfax and Prince William Counties. Adult jobseekers with a disability and returning citizens are being targeted. Services include career and diagnostic assessments, soft skills training, vocational/educational skills training; subsidized and unsubsidized work experience, job development, placement and retention services.
- The Choice Group- Training, placement and post-employment follow-up services to support greater employment retention will be provided. The Choice Group will work with any eligible participant; however, as the largest Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) vendor of Supported Employment services, they will support individuals with the most significant disabilities and help them find competitive employment.
- Worksource Enterprises- Project will continue and expand the successful joint efforts in working with low-income participants with a particular emphasis on employment that will lead to wage growth and career paths. Partners include the local departments of social service and DARS.

Report

The following chart includes cumulative data for all projects for two years of funding. Data are shown through the end of state fiscal year 2019 (June 30, 2019).

Measure	Number
Participants	1,187
Entered Employment	606
Unique Employers	395
Average Hourly Starting Wage	\$11.26
Jobs with Benefits	191
Part-time	263
Full-Time	343
Average Wage Increase	\$2.76
Jobs in a Career Pathway	328