

The Virginia Office of Education Economics' Research Agenda for Fiscal Year 2026

In accordance with [Item 113 L.3., Chapter 725 of the 2025 Acts of Assembly](#), this report details the annual research agenda for the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE), within the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP).

Background

VOEE serves as a pivotal resource for state-administered education and workforce programs by providing data, dashboards, analyses, and other resources to inform policy and practice at the intersection of education and workforce development. A diverse group of stakeholders, including the Governor and the General Assembly, looks to VOEE as a guide as they make strategic investments in current and future education and workforce training programs.

The mission of VOEE centers around higher education and workforce alignment. With a focus on data, VOEE is tasked with providing unified, consistent, and impartial information. VOEE operates at the intersection of two closely related but distinct worlds, enhancing collaboration among state agencies, educational institutions, and industry partners. As part of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), VOEE also seeks to align research initiatives with the state's economic growth objectives, ensuring that education and workforce programs contribute to broader economic development goals. In partnership with other talent-focused teams at VEDP, VOEE plays a critical role in the Commonwealth's talent-related initiatives.

Purpose of the Research Agenda

VOEE collaborates with its Research Advisory Group to develop and report the annual research agenda to the Governor and General Assembly on or before June 30th of each year. The current Research Advisory Group comprises of the Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Commerce and Trade; the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV); the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC); the Virginia Initiative for Growth and Opportunity Board (GO Virginia); the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works); and members of, or staff to, the House Committee on Education, Senate Committee on Education and Health, House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations.

The purpose of the annual research agenda is to establish a clear focus for the Office's work in the upcoming fiscal year and ensure that VOEE's efforts align with and support current state education and

workforce development initiatives. The research agenda involves close collaboration with the Research Advisory Group to support state and regional needs.

Notable Achievements through FY25

Over its first three years of existence, VOEE focused on building a robust data infrastructure and developing tools to share data and analyses across the Commonwealth. Between September 2023 and July 2024, VOEE published six distinct dashboards on its website. These user-friendly, interactive tools allow stakeholders to engage with and visualize data related to higher education and workforce demand.

In FY25, VOEE shifted its focus to higher-level analysis and disseminating insights more broadly. VOEE's key 2025 deliverables included:

- Reports and briefs based on the College and Career Outcomes Dataset
- A pilot Labor Market Profile in partnership with SCHEV for their program approval process
- Extensions to the Education and Workforce Alignment Dashboard and High Demand Occupations Dashboard

This past year, VOEE also expanded its team, adding two analysts and an executive assistant, and developed its first annual outreach plan. Finally, VOEE began a multi-year project that maps credentials to the existing High Demand Occupations List approved by the Virginia Board for Workforce Development.

Looking Ahead to FY26

Moving into FY26, VOEE aims to build on and move beyond its foundational work. This will comprise of six related, but distinct workstreams to inform policy and practice around education and workforce alignment across the Commonwealth.

Stream 1: Complete tasks assigned to VOEE in Code and budget language and by other agencies.

Objective: Support the Commonwealth by providing specific, assigned deliverables.

Rationale: VOEE's first objective is to provide deliverables assigned by the Administration and General Assembly.

Key Task for FY2026: Work with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD) to develop the 2026 High Demand Occupations List.

Stream 2: Provide data, dashboards, analyses, and other resources to inform diverse audiences about education and workforce alignment.

Objective: Support diverse stakeholders to make data-driven decisions with a variety of resources.

Rationale: VOEE is tasked with providing and visualizing data through easily accessible means.

Key Task for FY2026: Add credentials to the High Demand Occupations Dashboard.

Stream 3: Complete specific one-time and ongoing asks from stakeholders.

Objective: Provide customized data and analyses for stakeholders' specific requests.

Rationale: Many stakeholders require data and analyses that are not publicly available on VOEE's website.

Key Task for FY2026: Provide data for the Virginia Has Jobs website.

Stream 4: Identify and execute new data and research opportunities.

Objective: Improve VOEE's ability to answer questions about education and workforce alignment.

Rationale: To better serve the Commonwealth long term, VOEE must be proactive about identifying opportunities for advancement and improvement.

Key Task for FY2026: Explore alternative measures of talent supply-to-demand.

Stream 5: Provide data and analyses to other VEDP teams.

Objective: Support VEDP's efforts to develop talent solutions.

Rationale: As part of VEDP, VOEE's mission includes supporting economic development.

Key Task for FY2026: Contribute data for VEDP's talent playbooks.

Stream 6: Communicate about VOEE's work with diverse audiences through a variety of channels.

Objective: Engage new audiences and encourage existing audiences to use VOEE's resources.

Rationale: VOEE must interact regularly with stakeholders to support data-driven decision making.

Key Task for FY2026: Develop a quarterly newsletter to update the Research Advisory Group and other key stakeholders about VOEE's work.

FY26 Major Planned Projects

Major planned projects and the associated work streams.

Major Research Activity/ Project Name		Related Work Stream
1	Develop the High Demand Occupations List (2026) with VBWD	1
2	Identify High Demand Credentials	1 and 3
3	Develop Client-Facing Program-of-Study Scorecard with Virginia Works	1 and 3
4	Develop Supply-Demand Gap Dashboard for the Skilled Trades and Other Credentialed Occupations	1 and 3
5	Develop a Skills Adjacency Model for Federal Workers with Virginia Works	1
6	Participate in the Revision and Administration of the Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP)	1
7	Conduct Other Studies and Publish Reports	
7a	Publish a report based on the outcomes of graduates from liberal arts programs	4
7b	Publish the annual G3 report	1
7c	Conduct and publish CNA supply/demand gap analysis	4
7d	Conduct and publish an engineering talent retention study	4
8	Identify New Data and Research Methods	
8a	Identify new data sources and establish new data agreements to supplement VOEE's existing data infrastructure (e.g., VLDS)	4
8b	Identify opportunities for qualitative research (e.g., surveys) to supplement quantitative research.	4
8c	Consider developing another dataset matching higher education, UI, and professional social profile data	4
8d	Conduct a study of the CIP-SOC crosswalk and develop alternative measures of degree-to-demand	4
9	Complete Other Projects	
9a	Provide data for the Virginia Has Jobs Website	3
9b	Provide data and analyses to support other VEDP teams, including Talent Playbooks	5

9c	Provide custom data and analyses for stakeholders	3
10	Launch Communications Strategy	
10a	Identify and establish new audiences and communications channels using Salesforce and other resources	6
10b	Develop regular communications (e.g., newsletter) and establish frequencies	6
10c	Revamp the VOEE website to better connect stakeholders with VOEE resources	6
10d	Develop and deploy templates for content (e.g., occupational overviews, community college reports)	6
10e	Present at conferences, meetings, and other events with new audiences	6