



# VIRGINIA WORKS BIENNIAL EVALUATION

APPROVED BY THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ON MARCH 27, 2026



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# Executive Summary

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development (Board) requested the VCU Center for Public Policy (CPP) conduct an independent evaluation of the operational and program objectives of the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works), in compliance with Code of Virginia 2.2-2472.A.16. The evaluation is the first of the biennial evaluations for the newly established agency and focuses on gaining an understanding of the perceptions of the Virginia Works operational and program objectives using individual interviews and an electronic survey with key stakeholder groups.

Participation in the online survey was targeted towards Virginia Works staff, representatives of the Local Workforce Development Boards, and partners from other state agencies. Interviews were conducted with members of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, including the Executive Director, as well as functional leaders within Virginia Works.

The findings of this assessment generally support the observation that the intended benefits of establishing Virginia Works are being achieved. Naturally there are “growing pains” with any newly formed agency and opportunities exist to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization as well as build upon the initial successes of the agency.

The most prominent themes emerging from survey and interview responses were:

- Perception of Virginia Works as a bridge to connect job seekers and employers.
- Creation of Virginia Works improved coordination across workforce development programs in the Commonwealth for some stakeholder groups.
- Data collection and tracking workforce metrics viewed as most successfully implemented mandate.
- Communication and marketing to the public regarded as needing improvement.
- Engagement with business customers seen as needing significant improvement.

Survey and interview participants praised Virginia Works as “eliminating existing silos” and utilizing tracking and performance outcomes to “pivot or scale Virginia’s workforce strategy.” However, survey participants seemed to be split on whether Virginia Works reduced duplicative efforts across workforce development programs, with 46.1% agreeing the agency reduced duplicative efforts. While a slight majority of survey respondents agreed the creation of Virginia Works streamlined service delivery for job seekers, only 45.4% agreed the creation streamlined service delivery for employers.

When discussing challenges, survey participants expressed some concerns about staff having to spend significant time responding to unemployment questions. According to several survey participants, there still exists confusion within the public regarding the difference between Virginia Works and the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). Additional challenges reported by survey respondents

included key agency mandates being ambiguous and staffing shortages making implementation of mandates difficult.

Findings from the interviews generally supported those of the survey but a few insights contradicted some of the survey results. For example, the interview participants saw positive outcomes from internal and external communication while survey participants noted improvements were much needed. This difference is possibly due to the majority of survey respondents coming from Virginia Staff and the majority of interview responses coming from Board members.

The following summary of recommendations was developed based upon the themes from the participants and, where applicable, are correlated with the Virginia Works Strategic Plan Commitments (see Appendix C).

- Ensure a clear separation (outreach, training, signage, etc.) for the support and handling unemployment functions
- Invest in field staffing for outreach and employer engagement (2B Fall 2025-Fall 2030)
- Diversify funding sources to expand impact (5G Fall 2025-Fall 2030)
- Improve internal communication to support execution of the agency mandates (5K In Progress-Fall 2030)
- Increase efforts (staffing, funding, etc.) to support a comprehensive outreach, branding and marketing for Virginia Works services targeting both job seekers and employers. (5H Fall 2025- Fall 2026)
- Support investments in dashboards to enable data driven decisions for both state and regional programs, services, etc. Note this requires consistency in the data and data collection processes. (5A Fall 2025-Fall 2026)
- Increase efforts to connect with Virginia businesses; increase awareness of business services function (3A ,Fall 2025-Fall 2030, 3B In Progress-Fall 2026, 4A In Progress-Fall 2030, 4D, Fall 2025-Fall 2030, 5C Fall 2025-Fall 2030)

# Introduction

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development (Board) requested the Center for Public Policy (CPP) conduct an independent evaluation of the operational and program objectives of the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works). This request enables compliance with the Code of Virginia 2.2-2472.A.16. This evaluation is the first of the biennial evaluations for the newly established agency.

The Board requested the CPP evaluate the Virginia Works operational and program objectives through individual interviews and an electronic survey with key stakeholder groups. The interview and survey instruments focused on the following areas of the Virginia Works operational and program objectives, as determined by the Board Executive Director:

- Policies and procedures
- Communication and collaboration with staff and partners
- External outreach efforts to individuals and employers
- Use of technology
- Data and metrics related to workforce development

This report presents the results of this evaluation conducted December 1, 2025 through January 30, 2026.

# Methodology

The methodology for this evaluation was developed in collaboration with the Board Executive Director. The evaluation featured two components: an electronic survey and individual interviews with key stakeholder groups. Survey and interview participants were notified by the Executive Director in advance that CPP would be contacting them to participate in this evaluation. Their participation was voluntary but highly encouraged.

## Survey Methodology

In November 2025, consultants from the Center for Public Policy (CPP) drafted a survey as part of the overall evaluation of Virginia Works. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Executive Director of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, who also provided contact lists for relevant participants.

On December 1, 2025, an electronic survey invitation was sent out to 352 stakeholders, including: 316 Virginia Works staff, 7 workforce partners from other state agencies, and 24 representatives from Local Workforce Development Boards (Directors and board members). The survey was open through December 31, 2025. Stakeholders received 3 reminder emails to take the survey before the close date.

CPP consultants used the survey tool, QuestionPro, to administer the survey. Each respondent received an individual email invitation with a personalized survey link and were prevented from taking the survey more than once. Survey respondents were informed that all responses were confidential and any written comments shared during the survey will be reported anonymously when shared with the Board, the Virginia General Assembly, and the Virginia Governor’s Office.

The survey respondent list was developed by the Board Executive Director. The survey questions were developed by CPP consultants in collaboration with the Board Executive Director. A copy of the survey questions is provided in Appendix A.

The survey was open from December 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, with reminders sent by CPP to those who had not yet completed the survey on December 10, 17, and 31, 2025.

Role	Invitations	Participation Rate
Virginia Works staff	316	51.58% (163)
Representatives from Local Workforce Development Boards	24	70.83% (17)
Workforce partners from other state agencies	7	85.71% (6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>52.84% (186)</b>

Table 1: Evaluation Survey Participants

# Interview Methodology

On December 3, 2025, invitations to participate in individual interviews were sent to 28 individuals by CPP. The interviews were conducted by phone. Participants were notified their responses to interview questions would be kept confidential and their responses would be reported anonymously; the CPP would not identify which respondent provided which response. The interview participant list was developed by the Board Executive Director. The interview questions were developed in collaboration with the Board Executive Director. The list of questions is provided in Appendix B.

A reminder email was sent by CPP to those who had not yet scheduled an interview on December 15, 2025. The interviews were completed by January 13, 2026. A total of 15 interviews were conducted and reflect a response rate of approximately 54%.

The following table shows the participants invited to be interviewed as part of the evaluation and the participation rate:

Role	Invitations	Participation Rate
Board Executive Director	1	100% (1)
Members of the Board	20	50% (10 <sup>1</sup> )
Virginia Works Functional Area Leaders	7	57% (4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>54% (15)</b>

Table 2: Evaluation Interview Participants

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<sup>1</sup> The participation rate for the Members of the Board does not include the Board Executive Director; the analysis of the Board interviews includes the Director's feedback.

# Analysis and Findings

## Survey Results

### Overall Survey Themes

Based on the survey responses from Virginia Works staff, agency partners and representatives from both the LWDBs and the VBDB, the following themes emerged:

- The majority of respondents clearly understand the objectives of Virginia Works and agree with its mission.
- The majority of the agency has been relatively successful in fulfilling its mandates.
- Challenges exist with both internal and external communications resulting in a significant number of participants indicating they do not have sufficient information to gauge how well the agency is accomplishing its mission, objective, mandate, etc..
- Respondents believe current staffing levels are not sufficient.

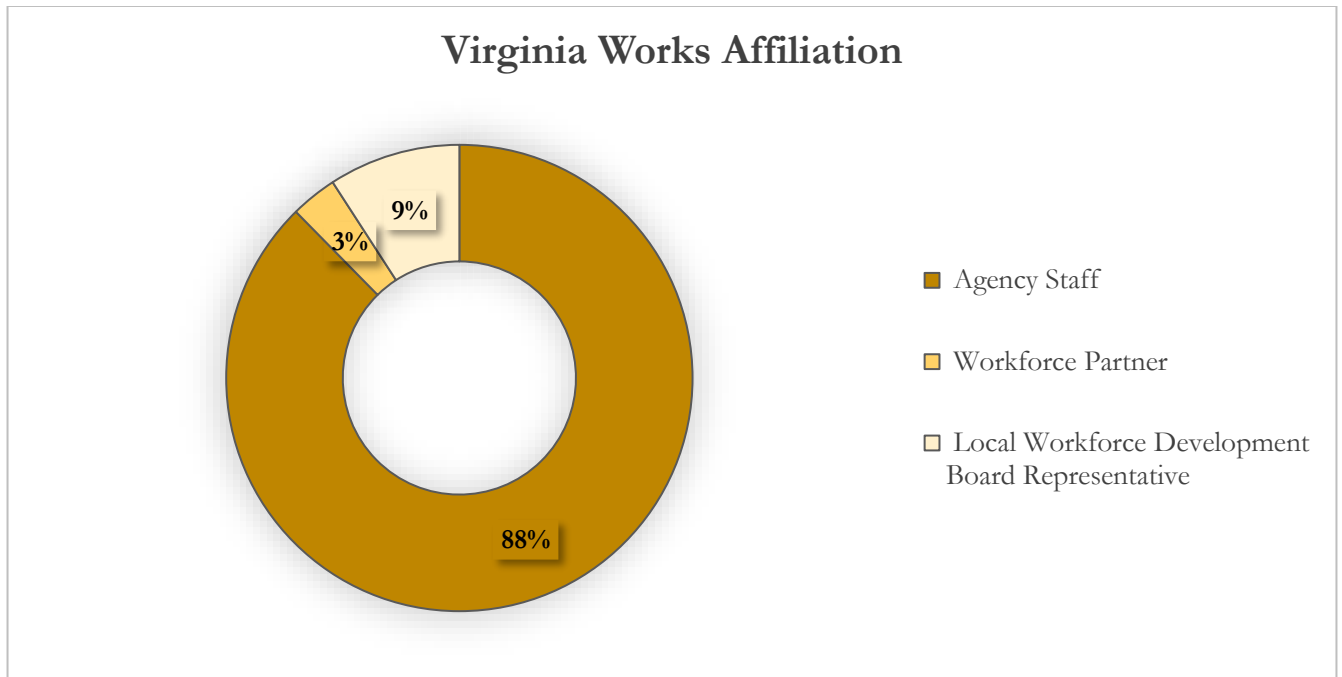
Responses to all survey questions are presented in detail throughout this section. Survey responses were also examined by respondent role type to determine whether perspectives differed across organizational positions. Overall, responses were largely consistent across roles, with no meaningful or significant variation observed in most items. Given the limited differences, results are reported in aggregate throughout this section rather than reported separately by role for each question. When notable differences<sup>2</sup> by role were identified, they are highlighted and discussed in the relevant sections.

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<sup>2</sup> Crosstabulation and chi-square tests were used to assess whether responses to each question varied by respondent role type. No statistically significant associations were observed.

## Participation

A total of 232 invitees attempted the survey and after reviewing responses, 46 responses were removed for failure to complete the survey beyond demographic questions leaving 186 responses for analysis. Of the valid responses, 163 participants were Virginia Works agency staff, 6 were workforce partners from other state agencies, and 17 were representatives from Local Workforce Development Boards.



*Figure 1: Evaluation Survey Participation Rate*

Of those 186 responses, the majority of participants (80%) indicated they worked for a program that was consolidated into Virginia Works. Participants' professional experience in the workforce industry ranged from under 1 year to over 40 years, with an average of 12.5 years.

## Virginia Works Objectives

Following Virginia Works introductory questions, participants were asked to describe the objectives of Virginia Works in their own words. The following themes emerged:

Theme	Overview
<p><b><i>“The Bridge” between job seekers and employers.</i></b></p>	<p>The most frequent theme that emerged described Virginia Works as acting as a bridge or matchmaker, connecting job seekers and employers.</p> <p>Respondents described the bridge as transitioning job seekers “from jobs to meaningful careers” while “providing family-sustaining wages” and “upskilling” to workers.</p> <p>Concerning employers, participants viewed Virginia Works as a “talent pipeline” and “recruitment partner” that helps ensure employers remain competitive for attracting qualified job seekers and job seekers have the skills employers need. Cementing the theme of Virginia Works as a bridge, close to 15% of respondents included the phrase: “We connect people to careers and employers to skilled talent.”</p>
<p><b><i>The “unified hub.”</i></b></p>	<p>The next most frequent theme described Virginia Works as serving as a “unified hub” for helping individual job seekers and employers. Specifically, participants cited Virginia Works as “eliminating existing silos,” “moving away from fragmented services to a centralized and unified hub” for Virginians.</p> <p>Numerous participants also cited Virginia Works as providing alignment for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, “managing partners to ensure streamlined programming.”</p> <p>Similarly, several participants elaborated that Virginia Works utilizes tracking and performance outcomes to “pivot or scale Virginia’s workforce strategy.”</p>
<p><b><i>Removing barriers for support and services.</i></b></p>	<p>Another theme identified from participant responses concerning the objectives of Virginia Works centered around the agency “moving beyond job matching” to “providing holistic support” and “removing barriers for job seekers.”</p> <p>Several responses described the “person-centered” nature of the agency, highlighting the wraparound services offered to Virginians, to include “assisting with housing, transportation, and license reinstatement.”</p> <p>Within this theme, respondents also highlighted the targeted support offered to specific populations, including “justice-impacted individuals,” veterans, and “those with significant barriers to employment.”</p> <p>Additionally, a handful of participants called attention to the agency offering “support during stressful transitions of unemployment” and providing “emotional support and knowledge” for Virginians.</p>

Theme	Overview
<p><i>A gap between stated objectives and operational realities.</i></p>	<p>While the overwhelming majority of descriptions of Virginia Works’ objectives reflected a positive view of the agency, a handful of participants offered criticisms of the agency's realities as compared to stated objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Unemployment Information</b> - several noted they were handling requests about unemployment with one respondent noting they are "SUPPOSE to focus on Job Services but the majority of our time is still dealing with unemployment questions."</li> <li>• <b>Objective Uncertainties</b> - a handful of respondents identified uncertainty surrounding the objective of the agency, detailing “our objectives are ambiguous at best” with another stating the objectives “are all over the place” and the newly formed agency is “a blunder.”</li> </ul>

Table 3: Respondent Perceptions of Virginia Works Objectives

In addition to asking participants to describe the objectives of Virginia Works, respondents were also asked to state their level of agreement, from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, with a series of statements related to the objectives of the agency. Across all statements, respondents were more likely to agree than disagree, specifically, most respondents selected “Agree” as the most common response. It should be noted, however, the second most common response across all statements was “Don’t Know.” Participants were rather evenly split in their levels of agreement surrounding agency objectives.

A majority of respondents (54.1%) agreed the creation of Virginia Works improved coordination across workforce development programs in the Commonwealth. Only a slight majority, 50.7%, agreed the creation of Virginia Works enhanced efficiency. Participants seemed to be most split on whether Virginia Works reduced duplicative efforts across workforce development programs, with 46.1% agreeing the agency reduced duplicative efforts and 31.9% disagreeing. While most respondents (52.2%) agreed the creation of Virginia Works streamlined service delivery for job seekers, only 45.4% agreed the creation streamlined service delivery for employers.

When questions concerning agency objectives were examined by role type, the most noted variations were noted in questions regarding the perceived improvements stemming from the creation of Virginia Works. While only a quarter (26.0%) of agency staff disagreed the creation of the agency had improved coordination across workforce programs, 63.6% of representatives from workforce boards disagreed. Similarly, close to a quarter (24.0%) agency staff disagreed the creation of the agency had enhanced efficiency across workforce programs, 72.7% of representatives from workforce boards disagreed. Another notable variation was present in regard to the streamlining of service delivery for employers in the wake of the creation of Virginia Works – with 45.9% of agency staff agreeing but only 18.9% of agreement from workforce board representatives.

Agency Objectives	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has improved coordination across the Commonwealth's Workforce Development programs.</i>	15.1%	39.0%	18.1%	9.3%	18.5%
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has enhanced efficiency across the Commonwealth's Workforce Development programs.</i>	14.6%	36.1%	16.1%	10.7%	22.4%
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has reduced duplicative efforts across the Commonwealth's Workforce Development programs.</i>	11.3%	34.8%	21.6%	10.3%	22.1%
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has streamlined service delivery for job seekers.</i>	11.7%	40.5%	17.1%	11.2%	19.5%
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has streamlined service delivery for employers.</i>	9.8%	35.6%	17.6%	10.2%	25.8%

Table 4: Respondents perspectives on Virginia Works Objectives



Participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any statement related to agency objectives were subsequently invited to provide explanations for their responses. Common explanations include:

- **Confusion surrounding unemployment** - the most frequent comment regarding agency objectives cited the public's inability to distinguish Virginia Works from the Virginia Employment Commission. Several participants reported being overwhelmed by customers seeking assistance with unemployment benefits, which takes time away from agency priorities.
- **Confusion surrounding agency purpose** - several survey respondents reported a lack of collaboration between Virginia Works, partner agencies, and local workforce boards that seemed to be driven by a lack of communication. Specifically, respondents noted "Virginia Works is treated as a competitor rather than a partner." Similarly, several participants relayed that the public, including partner agencies, are unclear about the purpose of the agency, citing

“we still have signs up indicating that we are Virginia Employment Commission and we are not so for the average customer it is misleading” and “employers do not know we are Virginia Works because there has been no communication.” One participant offered a recommendation to address the confusion: “there needs to be some branding that highlights VA Works on television and radio media. Most people are delighted and surprised (to learn) of the resources and services available to them.”

## Virginia Works Mission

In addition to asking participants about their agreement with statements related to Virginia Works objectives, respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement, from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”, with a series of statements concerning the mission of Virginia Works. Across all statements, respondents were more likely to agree than disagree, specifically, most respondents selected “Agree” as the most common response.

Agency Mission	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<i>I understand the mission of Virginia Works.</i>	45.2%	48.6%	3.4%	1.9%	1.0%
<i>The agency's mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services has been clearly communicated to you.</i>	33.2%	51.9%	9.1%	4.3%	1.4%
<i>The agency's mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services is clearly communicated to stakeholders.</i>	22.1%	41.8%	12.0%	4.8%	19.2%
<i>The agency's mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services is clearly communicated to customers.</i>	19.2%	35.6%	20.2%	13.0%	12.0%
<i>My daily work aligns with the agency's overall mission and objectives.</i>	32.2%	50%	7.2%	5.8%	4.8%

Table 5: Respondent's perspectives on Virginia Works Mission



There appears to be strong internal confidence surrounding the mission of Virginia Works as an overwhelming majority of participants (93.8%) reported agreeing (48.6%) or strongly agreeing (45.2%) with the statement “I understand the mission of Virginia Works.” Similarly, 85.1% of respondents agreed the “agency’s mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services” had been clearly reported to them. A smaller, yet still majority, percentage of participants (64.0%) agreed the agency mission had been clearly communicated to stakeholders. However, clear communication to

stakeholders received the highest number of “Don’t Know” responses with 19.2%. A slight majority (54.8%) agreed the agency’s mission had been clearly communicated to customers, while 33.2% disagreed and 12.0% reported they did not know. Lastly, over 80%, (82.2%), agreed their daily work aligned with the agency’s overall mission and objectives.

When questions concerning agency mission were examined by role type, the most noted variations were presented in the questions regarding the communication of agency mission to stakeholders and customers. While only 16.4% of agency staff disagreed the agency’s mission was clearly communicated to stakeholders, 36.4% of representatives from workforce boards disagreed. Similarly, 32.8% of agency staff disagreed the agency’s mission was clearly communicated to customers, 63.6% of board representatives disagreed.

Participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any statement related to agency mission were subsequently invited to provide explanations for their responses. The common explanation among participants seemed to focus on client confusion surrounding the agency mission. For example,

- “customers are still referring (to) our Agency as the ‘Unemployment Agency’.... we will continue needing better marketing.”
- “customers, especially job seekers, are not yet aware of the changes to their local/regional workforce centers, partly because our workforce centers are not promoting the new agency identity consistently yet.”
- “many individuals and stakeholders do not have a clear idea of what Virginia Works is and what we do.”
- “while the agency’s mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services may be well-defined internally, it is not consistently or effectively communicated to either stakeholders or customers in practice.”

## Agency Performance

After the questions related to Agency Mission and Objectives, participants were next presented with a series of mandates implemented by Virginia Works and asked to rate how successfully those mandates had been implemented, on a scale from “Very Successful” to “Not at all Successful”, by Virginia Works. “Tracking workforce metrics” was viewed as the most successfully implemented mandate with 16.8% of participants agreeing the mandate was implemented very successfully and 37.6% agreeing the mandate was successful. “Engaging the business community” and “collaborating with institutions of higher education” were viewed as the next most successful with 11.4% and 11.9% participants viewing the mandates as “Very Successful” and 31.2% and 34.2% viewing the implementation of the mandates as “Successful”, respectively. Conversely, “communicating system changes to the public” was viewed as the least successfully implemented mandate of Virginia Works, with 30.2% reporting the implementation was only “Somewhat Successful” and 23.27% reporting the implementation was not successful at all. It should be noted that between 15.3% and 23.3% responded “Don’t Know” across all agency mandates.

Although no statistically significant differences by role type were observed in ratings of agency mandate performance, it is noteworthy that no representatives from workforce boards rated any agency mandate performance as “Very Successful.”

Agency Mandates	Very Successful	Successful	Somewhat Successful	Not at all Successful	Don't Know
<i>Engaging the business community</i>	11.4%	31.2%	28.7%	9.4%	19.3%
<i>Collaborating with institutions of higher education</i>	11.9%	34.1%	24.8%	5.9%	23.3%
<i>Tracking workforce metrics</i>	16.3%	37.6%	19.8%	7.4%	18.8%
<i>Communicating system changes to the public</i>	4.5%	26.7%	30.2%	23.3%	15.4%
<i>Streamlining service delivery.</i>	9.4%	30.7%	24.8%	16.8%	18.3%

Table 6: Respondents perspectives on Virginia Works Performance



Participants who rated any agency mandate implementation as “Not at all Successful” were then invited to provide explanations for their responses. Across comments, participants reported similar themes as in other questions.

Mandate Impediments	Respondent Feedback
<b>Lack of external communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “the public still thinks we’re the unemployment office”</li> <li>• “the public doesn’t understand we are a separate agency from VEC”</li> <li>• “a lot of employers do not know who we are.”</li> </ul>
<b>Internal communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “communication from management isn’t clear”</li> <li>• “poor internal communication has led to poor external communication.”</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing Shortage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We don’t really have time to do any outreach... we need more time and more staff”</li> <li>• “outreach becomes almost impossible, somebody has to mind the store”</li> <li>• “we need more field staff, we need people to actually deliver the services”</li> <li>• “there are insufficient staff to meet the needs of the business community.”</li> </ul>

Table 7: Perceived impediments to implementing agency mandate

## Agency Effectiveness

Following the rating of the implementation of agency mandates, survey respondents were then asked to rate their level of agreement, from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” to a series of statements related to agency effectiveness. Across all six statements, agreement consistently outweighed disagreement, with 65.2% of participants agreeing that Virginia Works is a programmatic leader in workforce development and 65.3% of participants agreeing the agency is an effective central coordinator for Workforce Development. Similarly, 61.8% of respondents agreed Virginia Works is effectively delivering workforce programming across the Commonwealth and 59.3% agreed the creation of Virginia Works has improved the coordination of Workforce Development in the Commonwealth. A slight majority (52.8%) agreed the consolidation of multiple workforce programs in Virginia Works has been effective and 55.6% agreed the creation of Virginia Works has streamlined workforce services in the Commonwealth.

Agency Effectiveness	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
<i>Virginia Works is a programmatic leader in Workforce Development.</i>	19.2%	46.0%	18.1%	7.1%	16.2%
<i>Virginia Works is an effective central coordinator for Workforce Development.</i>	18.1%	47.2%	16.1%	6.0%	15.6%
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has improved the coordination of Workforce Development in the Commonwealth.</i>	15.6%	43.7%	11.56%	8.5%	20.1%
<i>Virginia Works is effectively delivering workforce programming across the Commonwealth</i>	14.6%	47.2%	11.1%	8.5%	18.6%
<i>The consolidation of multiple workforce programs in Virginia Works has been effective.</i>	13.6%	39.2%	12.6%	12.1%	22.6%
<i>The creation of Virginia Works has streamlined workforce services in the Commonwealth.</i>	14.6%	40.9%	14.1%	9.6%	20.7%

Table 8: Respondents perspectives on Virginia Works Effectiveness



Responses to statements regarding agency effectiveness were also analyzed by role type. Overall, responses were very similar across roles, with the most noted variation was present in the statements related to effectiveness of Virginia Works in delivering workforce programming. While only 18.3% of agency staff disagreed that workforce programming was being delivered effectively, over half (54.5%) of representatives from workforce boards disagreed. A similar discrepancy was apparent in agreement that Virginia Works “has improved the coordination of workforce development” in the Commonwealth.

Participants who disagreed or strongly disagreed with any statement related to agency effectiveness were subsequently invited to provide explanations for their responses. As a consequence of the higher level of agreement regarding the agency’s effectiveness, fewer explanations were offered by participants. As such, no clear themes emerged in responses. However, several participants offered insightful comments:

*“I don't understand how anything has been 'Streamlined'. Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE, is still operating exactly as before. This agency has the potential to do all of the above, but we need a true vision and a forensic audit. We need to give our local centers and staff the support and respect that is due to them.”*

*“In my experience, the consolidation of multiple workforce programs under Virginia Works has not been effective in the field. The streamlined structure has created confusion and disrupted the natural flow of communication. Each program truly needs its own dedicated chain of command led by a subject matter expert who understands the program’s needs, the field operations, the financial responsibilities, and the team dynamics. Since consolidation, communication has become mixed and often delayed. For example, field staff are now receiving direction from individuals who are not fully versed in program-specific requirements, leading to inconsistent guidance and misaligned expectations.”*

*“I don't see the change or hear from other Virginia Works staff that we are changing, streamlining services, consolidating programming, or improving coordination. It's basically business as usual. The agency has tried and I'm all onboard for the change and help promote and get the word out, I just don't see the changes we are looking for.”*

*“I don't think the efforts to date have yielded strong statements like 'streamlined' and 'effective.' Certainly the agency has been a leader and a convener.”*

## Agency Functions

Participants were next presented with a series of new functions implemented by Virginia Works and asked to rate how successful they had been implemented, on a scale from “Very Successful” to “Not at all Successful.”

“Developing Registered Apprenticeships” was viewed as the most successfully implemented agency function with 18.9% of participants agreeing the function was implemented very successfully and 33.7% agreeing the function was successfully implemented. “Partnering with local workforce boards” and “Partnering with businesses” were viewed as the next most successful with 16.1% and 13.5% participants viewing the new functions as “Very Successful” and 33.5% and 31.1% viewing the implementation of the new functions as “Successful”, respectively.

While “Partnering with businesses” was successfully implemented by some, others thought should be a focus area for improvement as it was also viewed as the least successfully implemented new function of Virginia Works, with 26.4% reporting the implementation was only “Somewhat Successful” and 7.3% reporting the implementation was not successful at all. It should be noted that between 21.8% and 36.3% responded “Don’t Know” across all agency mandates - the highest levels throughout the survey.

Although no statistically significant differences by role type were observed in ratings of the implementation of agency functions, it is noteworthy that only one representative from a workforce board rated any agency function as “Very Successful:” partnering with local workforce boards. Additionally, workforce board representatives were more likely than agency staff to rate “Building a grant funding strategy” as “Not at all successful.”

Participants who rated the implementation of any new agency function as “Not at all Successful” were then invited to provide explanations for their responses. Across comments, participants reported similar themes as in other questions.

Overall, respondents expressed limited confidence in progress related to Registered Apprenticeship (RA) and broader work-based learning initiatives. While a small number of comments acknowledged early-stage momentum or potential for improvement, the predominant theme seemed to be that the implementation of certain functions has been fragmented, understaffed, and poorly communicated, resulting in some participants not witnessing the observable impact at the field level. Relevant responses regarding Registered Apprenticeships included:

- “the entire RA grants team resigned in late 2024 and early 2025, it caused significant confusion” around applications, timelines, points of contact, and award decisions.
- “RA has devolved” and “we had so much success when we could effectively partner... we miss the employer support and the opportunity to work with RA since it has moved.”
- “the agency has increased the number of registered apprenticeships, participants and sponsor employers, and in general the business community does not understand how or where to start with registered apprenticeship.”

Staffing shortages and vacancies in key roles was noted as further exacerbating challenges:

- “the agency doesn’t have enough staffing so it does not offer work-based learning opportunities outside of RA”
- “lacks the internal capacity to fully implement and execute these initiatives.”
- “We have been unable to hire and retain a Work-based Learning Director,” leaving programs unable to expand even through partnerships.

Agency Functions	Very Successful	Successful	Somewhat Successful	Not at all Successful	Don't Know
<i>Developing Registered Apprenticeships</i>	18.7%	33.7%	18.1%	6.7%	22.8%
<i>Developing work-based learning beyond Registered Apprenticeships</i>	9.3%	28.5%	18.7%	10.4%	33.2%
<i>Building a grant funding strategy</i>	6.2%	31.1%	17.6%	9.3%	35.8%
<i>Partnering with local workforce boards</i>	16.1%	33.7%	20.2%	8.3%	21.8%
<i>Partnering with businesses</i>	13.5%	31.1%	26.4%	7.3%	21.8%
<i>Partnering with business associations</i>	11.4%	29.5%	23.8%	7.3%	28.0%
<i>Partnering with employee organizations</i>	8.3%	25.4%	21.8%	8.3%	36.3%
<i>Leveraging data insights</i>	10.4%	36.8%	18.1%	4.7%	30.1%

Table 9: Respondents perspectives on Virginia Works agency functions



To explore the perceptions of functions of Virginia Works in more detail, participants were asked to select the functional areas of Virginia Works they perceive to be most successful and the areas in need of the most improvement. Participants were asked to select no more than three areas<sup>3</sup>. The functional areas selected the most are listed below:

## Most Successful

1. **Service Delivery** – direct support of individuals and employers through workforce centers.
2. **Technology and Data** – providing data on the labor market, economic analysis, providing guidance on technology use, and providing technology resources.
3. **Partnerships and Engagement** – working with employers and industry groups, convening partners and stakeholders for events, hosting webinars, and providing digital resources.
4. **Policy and Strategy** – setting policies for the workforce system, developing and executing initiatives, and providing strategic guidance.
5. **Outcome, Evaluations, and Improvement** – tracking metrics that matter and effective communications of outcomes to partners, stakeholders, and policy makers.
6. **Programs and Grants Management** – compliance, technical assistance, and creating grant funding opportunities.



## Most in Need of Improvement

1. **Partnerships and Engagement**
2. **Service Delivery**
3. **Policy and Strategy**
4. **Programs and Grants Management**
5. **Technology and Data**
6. **Outcome, Evaluations, and Improvement**

As compared to agency staff, workforce board representatives viewed 1) Policy and Strategy, 2) Outcome, Evaluations, and Improvement, and 3) Partnerships and Engagement as the most successful functional areas. In an interesting shift, board representatives identified 1) Service Delivery as the functional area most in need of improvement, followed by 2) Programs and Grants Management.

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<sup>3</sup> As participants were asked to select their top 3 functional areas and 3 areas most needing improvement, functional areas can appear on both the “Most Successful” as well as on the list of those in “Most Need of Improvement.” It is recommended additional research be conducted to better understand respondent perceptions.

Upon rating the most successful agency functional areas and those most in need of improvement, participants were asked how Virginia Works might improve those identified functional areas. Across responses, recommended improvements focused on:

- **Clear separation and support for unemployment functions**<sup>4</sup>: Several participants recommended structural changes such as “totally separate unemployment from Job Services locations” and adding unemployment services capacity within workforce settings by “placing a VEC representative within each Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to provide Unemployment Insurance (UI) services.” Others urged enabling staff to support customers comprehensively, “by allowing us to help the whole customer... VEC help plus job services. BOTH.”
- **Investment in field staffing**: A common improvement request was increased staffing in local offices. “The most critical need is increased field staffing,” including requests to “hire needed employees in field offices” and “more front-line staff to work in local workforce centers.” Participants also mentioned the need to “fill open positions in the centers.” These capacity constraints were described as directly limiting outreach and employer engagement - “Not enough staff to be responsible for engaging the business community,” and “somebody has to mind the store.”
- **Improving communication**: Respondents highlighted inconsistent guidance and insufficient communication, both internally and externally. For example, several participants repeated concerns surrounding **external communication** - “the public still thinks we’re the unemployment office” and “the public doesn’t understand we are a separate agency from VEC” and “a lot of employers do not know who we are.” **Internal communication** was also cited as an impediment to success, with participants noting “communication from management isn’t clear” and “poor internal communication has led to poor external communication.”

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<sup>4</sup> Requirements for a comprehensive center is available [here](#).

## Additional Respondent Feedback

The final question of the survey asked participants to share any additional thoughts or comments about Virginia Works. The following reflect comments (edited for clarity and brevity) reported by participants:

### Agency Structure Challenges

*“The agency has shifted to increase upper-level staff but has neglected our local branches with much needed staff. At this point most of your offices are staffed with 1 manager and 1 career navigator with no mention of career strategies or pay increase.”*

*“Virginia Works is facing serious structural and operational challenges that cannot be ignored.... high turnover, low morale, and widespread dissatisfaction among staff reflect deeper issues within the organization. The agency has potential, but meaningful improvement will require decisive action: stronger leadership, unified and comprehensive guidance, and a commitment to rebuilding trust with employees.”*

*“We need more employees please.”*

*“This agency has become an upside-down pyramid. Front facing employees are severely underpaid and underappreciated.”*

*“The agency is off to a great start. It is time for increased management and focus on running the agency itself.”*

*“While the mission and function of Virginia Works remain clear, unaddressed staffing shortages at the local level continue to hinder meaningful delivery of services, morale, and community engagement.”*

*“The current organizational structure at Virginia Works is heavily top-weighted, with insufficient staffing in the field to support effective service delivery.”*

## Internal Communication Opportunities

*“Management needs to listen... People feel “talked down to” and NOT listened to.”*

*“Leadership also has to do a better job of communicating policy changes that directly impact staff at the program level.”*

*“The agency has been going through a serious transition, and most realize that it will be some growing pains and it would not be an overnight process, but respectfully, you have to show genuine concern for the boots on the ground because inevitably, they’re the ones tasked to do the job that makes all of this work.”*

*“I love my job and the work I do, but I feel that the lack of communication with staff is a major gap that needs to be addressed.”*

*“Communication across cross-functional areas is desperately needed”*

## Agency Strengths

*“I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the agency as an employee and look forward to making a greater contribution to its future initiatives, growth and success.”*

*“We do great things for the citizens of Virginia. I am proud to provide the services, resources, education, knowledge, skills and abilities to our clients (individuals and businesses).”*

*“I am enjoying the changes that have taken place over the last year and one-half and I feel it is heading in all the right directions to make a very strong organization with continued growth.”*

*“I am proud to be an employee of Virginia Works. I am excited about the future of the Agency and look forward to adding value as an employee.”*

*“In the past two years there has been tremendous effort and successful implementation of where we are going and why we are going to get there that was not there in the old workforce systems/programs before. I have really enjoyed watching this transformation and I hope we can continue to see how far and how successful it can be for the future.”*

*“Virginia Works is an excellent agency to work for and seems to be evolving daily”*

*“Great Employer to work for”*

*“I love the Agency and the leadership that represents our agency. I feel like we have very smart and talented people who work in our management positions.”*

*“I’m so impressed with the accomplishments of Virginia Works to date. I believe serving job seekers and employers is their primary responsibility, which is achieved through collaboration with others.”*

*“Virginia Works shows real promise as a unifying force in Virginia's workforce system. By bringing agencies, employers, and job seekers under a more coordinated structure, it has the potential to make services easier to access, reduce duplication, and better align training with real labor-market needs. If it continues to strengthen collaboration and stay responsive to both workers and businesses, Virginia Works can become a powerful driver of economic opportunity and statewide prosperity.”*

*“Virginia Works has some amazingly talented and dedicated staff, it's (sic) creation was a great idea and overall has a tremendous amount of potential. But, it must get the foundations in place before it takes on a single additional initiative or project. The window is closing to get this done right and it will be much harder to fix after the fact.”*

*“The transition has been somewhat painful, but necessary, and I feel we are on the "other side" of the transition. Workforce in general is particularly vital in this chaotic, uncertain time and economy. Our services are only going to be more in demand, with AI prompting a serious need for greater training and education in these areas. We need to be ready to help that sector progress (and with human beings).”*

# Interview Results

## Overall Interview Themes

The majority of the interviews (67%) were conducted with Members of the Board, while four interviews (26%) were conducted with leaders of Virginia Works functional areas. Throughout the 15 interviews, the following themes were repeated consistently:

- A top priority is continuing and expanding the agency's efforts to collect and report workforce data.
- Communication and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders were generating positive impacts for the Commonwealth.
- Additional efforts are needed in marketing and outreach to Virginia businesses.

When asked about positive impacts brought by the establishment of Virginia Works, one of the most commonly mentioned impacts was data collection and reporting. Members of the Board, the Executive Director, and Virginia Works leaders agreed that significant progress has been made over the last two years to collect workforce data from around the Commonwealth. The objective of this data collection is to establish benchmarks for workforce programs, which will allow for the establishment of program goals. Interview participants agreed there is more work to be done in this area and Virginia Works is on the right track. A new dashboard was recently debuted to the Board in December 2025 that visually presents the progress the agency has made. The Board and Virginia Works leaders are looking forward to future dashboard updates where the data can be reported by workforce region (instead of only the Commonwealth overall).

Another positive impact brought by Virginia Works is the increased communication and collaboration with stakeholders across the Commonwealth. Interview participants detailed examples of Virginia Works increasing communication with the American Job Centers, local workforce partners, and other workforce agencies. Members of the Board reported seeing the impacts of this increased communication in the regions they represent. Virginia Works leaders reported seeing the increased collaboration positively impact their work in Richmond. Interview participants are looking forward to this communication and collaboration continuing.

One challenge that interview participants agreed needs additional attention is the efforts to connect with Virginia businesses. Members of the Board, the Executive Director, and Virginia Works leaders agreed that most businesses are not aware of the services the workforce system can offer them. Participants believe increased awareness in the business community of these services would support a healthier workforce overall. One participant gave an example of a business that had a large layoff and may not have known they could contact Virginia Works before the layoff was necessary to receive help in keeping those individuals employed. Participants agreed an intentional push to conduct outreach to these businesses should be a focus.

## Board Member Interview Themes

Interviews were conducted with 10 Board members and one Board Executive Director. Ten of the 11 Board participants have been on the Board for more than two years. This group has experience with the Virginia workforce development system before the establishment of Virginia Works. They agreed that the consolidation of multiple workforce programs into one agency was a good decision. The consensus is that Virginia Works is on the right track with more work to be done. The following information highlights the benefits and opportunities for Virginia Works.

### Objectives of Virginia Works

All interview participants were asked to put the objectives of the agency into their own words. The most common words used to describe the objectives were:

- Connecting job seekers to employers
- Addressing the needs of both job seekers and employers
- Providing training and skill building services

These perspectives align well with the Virginia Works mission of “We connect people to careers and employers to skilled talent.” It appears that the understanding of participating Board members aligns with the stated objectives of the agency.

### Positive Impacts of Virginia Works

All interview participants were asked to share positive impacts brought by the agency over the last two years. The most common impacts shared were:

- More available data and greater capacity to make decisions based on this data
- Increased collaboration and communication with external stakeholders
- Responses during times of workforce crises, e.g., layoffs and business closings

Board participants mentioned they have access to data and outcomes of the workforce system they did not previously have due to the efforts of Virginia Works. They are excited about future opportunities to expand this data to include more regionally specific data. They recognize that each region has unique circumstances and the ability to make decisions based on regional data will be helpful. In this area, Board members agreed Virginia Works is on the right track and they are expecting more progress in the short term.

Board members also reported seeing additional communication and collaboration with external stakeholders. They see Virginia Works reaching out to local partners, other agencies, and even other Secretariats to maximize their reach. Interview participants saw these efforts positively and wished for this work to continue.

The final common theme across the Board participants was the agency's efforts to respond when jobs seekers and businesses needed support urgently. The two examples provided were recovery after Hurricane Helene and during the federal government layoffs. Board participants saw the efforts made by the agency to provide services and support to those in need of workforce services.

### **Challenges Still Facing Virginia Works**

When asked about the challenges the agency has faced that need additional efforts, the Board participants once again brought up data and technology. They are encouraged with the progress made so far, but articulated there is plenty more work to do. Specifically, they are looking for consistency in the data and data collection. They are also looking for technology resources that will allow for improved data collection. Members of the Board referred to the unsuccessful effort to implement a data portal for the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). They support collecting data at the regional level but shared these efforts to force the implementation of this particular tool were not effective. They support the implementation of another data collection tool that will allow for the unique aspects of each region while still collecting consistent data that can be reported to the Board.

### **Opportunities for Future Growth**

All interview participants were asked what they were looking forward to seeing from Virginia Works in the next one to two years. The most common responses were:

- Continuing the overall progress that has been made in the last few years
- Increased efforts in branding and marketing to businesses customers
- Additional data dashboards and continued data-driven decision making

Multiple Board participants stressed the importance of staying the course on the activities Virginia Works is doing even amidst the changing gubernatorial administrations. They recognized that changing administrations can sometimes cause disruption and they hoped this would not be the case this year. They shared that Virginia Works is still in its early stages and have asked that the agency be permitted to continue its work so that the model can be matured. They stressed that it will take time to see if the work being done is successful and hope the agency will be given that time.

In addition, Board interview participants agreed that too many potential workforce customers are still unaware of the services offered by the public workforce system. Now that Virginia Works has been established, the participants see many opportunities to market this brand. They mentioned paying particular attention to Virginia businesses who do not realize regional and statewide Business Services Teams exist to help them. A few participants mentioned businesses that are aware of Virginia Works associate the public workforce system with too much paperwork and too many restrictions. Board participants hope that with a coordinated effort, this perception can change.

Finally, Board participants are looking forward to the creation of additional data dashboards to help them better understand the outcomes of the workforce system. They explained the importance of focusing on goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) so they could make data-driven decisions.

They are hoping data collection can be standardized and systems unified so that real-time data at the state and regional levels will be available.

### **Feedback from the Board on Collaboration with Virginia Works Staff**

All Board interview participants were asked about their experiences working with agency staff. The majority described Virginia Works staff as professional, responsive, and knowledgeable. Many recognized Virginia Works Commissioner Nicole Overley specifically for her work with the Board. A couple of the Board participants provided mixed reviews of working with agency staff; at least one noted the staff members with whom they did not have positive experiences are no longer with the agency.

## **Virginia Works Leaders Interview Themes**

Four of the seven invited agency leaders participated in interviews and represented different parts of the agency. Due to the small sample size (and to protect the anonymity of those participating), limited themes were generated from the interview results.

Overall, Virginia Works leaders reported:

- The agency is intentionally developing a workplace culture that is different from a stereotypical state agency, and these efforts have been largely successful.
- The agency is working actively to diversify funding streams given the agency is almost entirely funded by federal funds that include many restrictions.
- There is limited time for focused, heads-down work (e.g., having to attend meetings), which is limiting the effectiveness of the agency.

### **Project-based Workplace Culture**

Participating Virginia Works leaders reported intentional efforts to establish a project-based workplace culture rather than function-based. They report this type of culture enables siloes to be broken down and staff to contribute more directly to the overall mission of the agency. This is in contrast to workplace cultures (e.g., the culture of some of the agencies consolidated into Virginia Works) where staff complete their job functions without connecting the work to the current agency context or priority.

Participants reported that agency staff are willing to try new things and consider ways of working that may be more effective than traditional methods. They report the breaking down of silos has led to staff better understanding what other workforce programs do. This silo-breaking benefits the American Job Centers where it is leading to better referrals and co-enrollment for workforce customers. Participants report increased communication and training provided to the American Job Centers is resulting in an improved workplace development culture across the Commonwealth. They also noted the increased focus on talent development through internal training is seen to be a positive opportunity for the future of the agency.

## **Diversify Funding Streams**

Additionally, a high priority for the agency going forward is to diversify the agency's funding streams. Participants reported the agency hired a grants manager, which has led to the agency receiving additional workforce grants. However, federal funding is typically restricted to specific programs or functions. Participants are hoping for state funding in the future that can be used for initiatives that federal funding cannot cover.

## **Increase Worker Productivity**

Finally, participants reported some difficulty in finding time for focused, independent work. While the increased collaboration and communication across the agency and Commonwealth is seen as a positive, the constant meetings and interruptions throughout the work day make completing other work difficult. Reported suggestions for alleviating this strain include increasing the number of "work from home days" from one to two days per week and limiting the amount of hours per day staff spend in meetings.

# Recommendations

The findings of this assessment, when considering the results of the surveys and interviews generally support the observation that the intended benefits of establishing Virginia Works are being achieved. Naturally there are “growing pains” with any newly formed agency and opportunities exist to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization as well as build upon the initial successes of the agency.

The following recommendations were developed based upon the themes from the participants and, where applicable, are correlated with the Virginia Works Strategic Plan Commitments (see Appendix C).

Recommendations	Background	Strategic Plan Commitments <sup>5</sup>
Ensure a clear separation (outreach, training, signage, etc.) for the support and handling unemployment functions	Staff shared there is confusion (both internally and externally) regarding the role of Virginia Works versus the Virginia Employment Commission which results in having to spend time handling unemployment related questions.	N/A
Invest in field staffing for outreach and employer engagement	A common improvement request was for increased staffing in local offices as current capacity constraints were described as directly limiting outreach and employer engagement.	2B (Fall 2025-Fall 2030)
Diversify funding sources to expand impact	Participants reported the agency hired a grants manager, which has led to the agency receiving additional workforce grants. However, federal funding is typically restricted to specific programs or functions. Participants are hoping for state funding in the future that can be used for initiatives that federal funding cannot cover.	5G (Fall 2025-Fall 2030)

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<sup>5</sup> These commitments may partially address the recommendation and additional analysis is likely needed to determine if other actions are required to address the assessment findings.

Recommendations	Background	Strategic Plan Commitments <sup>5</sup>
Improve internal communication to support execution of the agency mandates	Survey results show a need to improve employee understanding of the agency mandates and objectives, as a number of participants did not know how well the organization was performing regarding these items. Feedback also showed “communication from management isn’t clear” and “poor internal communication has led to poor external communication.”	5K (In Progress-Fall 2030)
Increase efforts (staffing, funding, etc.) to support a comprehensive outreach, branding and marketing for Virginia Works services targeting both job seekers and employers.	According to assessment participants there still exists confusion within the public (job seekers and employers) regarding the services offered by Virginia Works and how it differs from the VEC. Participants also noted challenges in collaborating with other state agencies as some see Virginia Works as a competitor rather than a partner.	5H (Fall 2025- Fall 2026)
Support investments in dashboards to enable data driven decisions for both state and regional programs, services, etc. Note this requires consistency in the data and data collection processes.	The Board and Virginia Works leaders are looking forward to future dashboard updates where the data can be reported by workforce region (instead of only the Commonwealth overall) and support data driven program decisions.	5A (Fall 2025-Fall 2026)
Increase efforts to connect with Virginia businesses; increase awareness of business services function.	Participants agreed additional focus is needed to connect the agency with Virginia businesses. Members of the Board, the Executive Director, and Virginia Works leaders agreed that most businesses are not aware of the services the workforce system can offer them. Participants believe increased awareness in the business community of these services would support a healthier workforce overall.	3A (Fall 2025-Fall 2030) 3B (In Progress-Fall 2026) 4A (In Progress-Fall 2030) 4D (Fall 2025-Fall 2030) 5C (Fall 2025-Fall 2030)

# Appendices

# Appendix A: Survey Questions

Welcome to the Virginia Works Evaluation Survey. In 2023, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation to establish the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement, also known as Virginia Works, to consolidate key workforce programs and serve as a centralized workforce coordinator. On behalf of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, the VCU Center for Public Policy (CPP) is conducting an independent evaluation of the operational and program objectives of Virginia Works. As staff, partners, and stakeholders of Virginia Works, we are interested in your perspectives about the newly formed agency. All responses to this survey are confidential. Any written comments shared during the survey will be reported anonymously. Results of the survey will be analyzed and shared with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, the Virginia General Assembly, and the Virginia Governor's Office. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. For questions about the survey, please email the CPP at [cpp@vcu.edu](mailto:cpp@vcu.edu). Thank you for sharing your opinions with us!

## 1a. Which of the following best describes your affiliation with Virginia Works?

- a) I am a staff member of Virginia Works
- b) I am a staff member or representative of a state agency workforce partner
- c) I am a director, staff member, or representative of a local Workforce Development Board
- d) Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 1b. Did you previously work for one of the programs that were consolidated into Virginia Works?

- a) Yes
- b) No

## 2. Which of the following best describes your Virginia Works functional area?

- a) Policy and Strategy
- b) Partnerships and Engagement
- c) Service Delivery
- d) Programs and Grants Management
- e) Technology and Data
- f) Outcome, Evaluations, and Improvement
- g) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. How many years have you worked in the workforce industry? (open-ended response)

## 4. In your own words, please describe the objectives of Virginia Works. (open-ended response)

**5. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
I understand the mission of Virginia Works.					
The agency's mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services has been clearly communicated to you.					
The agency's mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services is clearly communicated to stakeholders.					
The agency's mission to improve coordination and streamline workforce services is clearly communicated to customers.					
My daily work aligns with the agency's overall mission and objectives.					

If you responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree to any of the statements above, please explain why. (open-ended response)

**6. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
The creation of Virginia Works has improved coordination across the Commonwealth's Workforce Development programs.					
The creation of Virginia Works has enhanced efficiency across the Commonwealth's Workforce Development programs.					
The creation of Virginia Works has reduced duplicative efforts across the Commonwealth's Workforce Development programs.					
The creation of Virginia Works has streamlined service delivery for job seekers.					
The creation of Virginia Works has streamlined service delivery for employers.					

If you responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree to any of the statements above, please explain why. (open-ended response)

**7. Please rate the degree to which you feel the following mandates have been successfully implemented by Virginia Works:**

	Very successful	Successful	Somewhat successful	Not at all successful	Don't Know
Engaging the business community					
Collaborating with institutions of higher education					
Tracking workforce metrics					
Communicating system changes to the public					
Streamlining service delivery					

If you responded “Not at all successful” to any of the statements above, please explain why. (open-ended response)

**8. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Virginia Works is a programmatic leader in Workforce Development.					
Virginia Works is an effective central coordinator for Workforce Development.					
The creation of Virginia Works has improved the coordination of Workforce Development in the Commonwealth.					
Virginia Works is effectively delivering workforce programming across the Commonwealth.					
The consolidation of multiple workforce programs in Virginia Works has been effective.					

The creation of Virginia Works has streamlined workforce services in the Commonwealth.					
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If you responded Strongly Disagree or Disagree to any of the statements above, please explain why. (open-ended response)

**9. Please rate the degree to which you feel the following new functions have been successfully implemented by Virginia Works:**

	Very successful	Successful	Somewhat successful	Not at all successful	Don't Know
Developing Registered Apprenticeships					
Developing work-based learning beyond Registered Apprenticeships					
Building a grant funding strategy					
Partnering with local workforce boards					
Partnering with businesses					
Partnering with business associations					
Partnering with employee organizations					
Leveraging data insights					

If you responded “Not at all successful” to any of the statements above, please explain why. (open-ended response)

**10. What functional areas of Virginia Works do you find to be most successful? Please select no more than three.**

- Policy and Strategy – setting policies for the workforce system, developing and executing initiatives, and providing strategic guidance.
- Partnerships and Engagement – working with employers and industry groups, convening partners and stakeholders for events, hosting webinars, and providing digital resources.
- Service Delivery – direct support of individuals and employers through workforce centers.
- Programs and Grants Management – compliance, technical assistance, and creating grant funding opportunities.
- Technology and Data – providing data on the labor market, economic analysis, providing guidance on technology use, and providing technology resources.
- Outcome, Evaluations, and Improvement – tracking metrics that matter and effective communications of outcomes to partners, stakeholders, and policy makers.
- None of the Above

**11. What functional areas of Virginia Works do you believe need the most improvement? Please select no more than three.**

- Policy and Strategy – setting policies for the workforce system, developing and executing initiatives, and providing strategic guidance.
- Partnerships and Engagement – working with employers and industry groups, convening partners and stakeholders for events, hosting webinars, and providing digital resources.
- Service Delivery – direct support of individuals and employers through workforce centers.
- Programs and Grants Management – Compliance, technical assistance, and creating grant funding opportunities.
- Technology and Data – providing data on the labor market, economic analysis, providing guidance on technology use, and providing technology resources.
- Outcome, Evaluations, and Improvement – tracking metrics that matter and effective communications of outcomes to partners, stakeholders, and policy makers.
- None of the Above

**12. How might Virginia Works improve upon these areas? (open-ended response)**

**13. Please share any additional thoughts or comments you may have about Virginia Works. (open-ended response)**

# Appendix B: Interview Questions

## Workforce Board Interview Questions

ID	Question
1	What is your role on the Board and how long have you been on it?
2	What is your understanding of the objectives of Virginia Works?
3	What has been your experience when directly collaborating with Virginia Works staff?
4	Based on your first-hand experiences or observations, how would you describe Virginia Work's effectiveness over the last 2 years?
5	What changes, if any, has Virginia Works implemented that you feel have had a positive impact on workforce development effectiveness?
6	What changes, if any, has Virginia Works implemented that you feel have not been as effective as they could have been?
7	Looking forward, what opportunities for improvement exist for Virginia Works? Which of these opportunities would you like to see prioritized?
8	Is there anything else you would like to share today?

## Virginia Works Interview Questions

ID	Question
1	What is your role in Virginia Works and how long have you been in it?
2	How does your functional area support the mission of Virginia Works? What are your functional area's objectives?
3	Does your functional area work directly with customers (individuals seeking employment/training or businesses)? a) If so, does your functional area collect data on customer satisfaction? b) If so, how would you characterize that feedback? What is the customer's impression of the effectiveness of your functional area?
4	How would you describe the effectiveness of your functional area when you first joined? a) If greater than 2 years ago, how would you describe it as of this time in 2023?
5	What changes has your functional area experienced since this time in 2023? a) Which of those changes, if any, have had a positive impact on your functional area's effectiveness? b) Which of those changes, if any, have been the most challenging for your functional area to respond to?
6	How would you describe the effectiveness of your functional area now?
7	Looking forward, what opportunities for improvement exist for your functional area? Which of these opportunities could be accomplished in the next year?
8	Which other functional areas do you collaborate with the most? a) How would you characterize your area's collaboration with these other areas? b) What changes, if any, could make that collaboration more effective?
9	If you were Commissioner for a day, what changes would you make to your functional area?
10	Is there anything else you would like to share today?

# Appendix C: Virginia Works Strategic Plan Commitments (Initiatives)

Virginia Works Commitments per the 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan		
Commitment	Action	Timeline
<b>Provide world-class, omnichannel service delivery to both employers and individuals</b>	Embed artificial intelligence into Virginia Works’ job search and career coaching tools and services.	In Progress Fall 2026
	Launch the skills hub of Virginia Has Jobs to increase exposure to learning & upskilling opportunities on AI, data science, human skills, and more.	In Progress Fall 2026
	Implement mobile service delivery systems.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
	Host AI-focused business education events to help small businesses understand and adopt AI technologies.	Fall 2026-Fall 2030
<b>Build active, resilient partnerships at the state and local level</b>	Launch Workforce Innovation Lab with explicit goal of state-local collaborative pilot projects.	Winter 2026- Winter 2027
	Implement omnichannel client experience – digital, in-person, hybrid - including redesign of American Job Centers’ (AJCs’) service delivery models (hours, staffing, mobile access, surge support).	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
	Lead in convening the Commonwealth’s workforce ecosystem, cataloging programs, and building an engaged best practices network.	In Progress Fall 2030
	Create and disseminate relevant, timely, and actionable career navigation content for individuals	In Progress Fall 2030
	Employment support for justice impacted individuals through Opportunity Advocates.	In Progress July 2026
	Establish and operate a Veterans’ Portal to support transitioning service members into training and employment.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
<b>Build the highest-performing client service organization</b>	Establish quantitative and qualitative mechanisms for continuous employer needs assessment & “market scanning”.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
	Refresh and digitize the Business Services Guide and approach to present a unified, holistic view of business services.	In Progress Fall 2026
	Track & forecast workforce supply / demand and program outcomes.	In Progress Fall 2028

**Virginia Works Commitments per the 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan**

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	Design and implement industry communities of practice	In Progress Fall 2030
	Reimagine Layoff Aversion services to provide talent concierge services to employers.	In Progress Fall 2030
<b>Implement effective and responsive sector-focused talent strategies</b>	Launch employer-focused Commonwealth-wide effort around work-based learning (experiential learning)	In Progress Fall 2030
	Design and implement career pathways and work-based learning internal talent programs (i.e. RA) – “practice what we preach”.	In Progress-Fall 2026
	Formalize Virginia Talent Network as collaborative group of state partners led by VW, VEDP, and Chamber that showcases talent solutions to employers.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2027
	Align education and training with employer/industry needs to strengthen talent development.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
	Expand Registered Apprenticeship Program through accelerator program for healthcare and childcare and by increasing number of RA Intermediaries.	In Progress ongoing
<b>5. Build nation-leading workforce tech stack &amp; data capabilities that allow us to see progress both in real time and over time</b>	5A. Create and launch comprehensive Virginia Works operations dashboard to track and manage system capacity.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2026
	5B. Implement customer satisfaction measurement at scale, including employer net promoter score and penetration rate.	Spring 2026 – Fall 2026
	5C. Implement an employer customer relationship management system,	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
	5D. Lead the ecosystem in using metrics and outcomes data to drive process and service delivery improvements.	Fall 2025 - Spring 2026
	5E. Define and measure return on investment (ROI) of specific programs and include in annual impact report for stakeholders.	In Progress Fall 2030
	5F. Lead in how we share data across partners to support collective goals.	In Progress Fall 2027
	5G. Lead in how we bring partners together to diversify and grow our collective funding.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2030
	5H. Create, implement, and continuously communicate a unified and coherent external brand for the ecosystem.	Fall 2025 - Fall 2026
	5I. Create easy-to-use, digital program reference guides to empower all team members (and partners as	In progress Fall 2026

**Virginia Works Commitments per the 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan**

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	desired) with basic program info and standardize ways of operating.	
	5J. Upskill and cross-train all agency team members on all programs, services, and latest technology.	In Progress Fall 2026
	5K. Deliver focused, interactive professional development experiences at all levels with a focus on client services, communication, and accountability.	In Progress Fall 2030
	5L. Launch internal employee recognition and awards programs.	In Progress Fall 2026

# The Center for Public Policy

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