

APPROVED

THE VIRGINIA APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MINUTES

The Virginia Apprenticeship Council met on Thursday, December 5, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dudley Harris, Chair
Nicole Overly, (Secretary of the Council)
Dr. Jameo Pollock
Gary Pan
Grant Shmelzer
Steve Masterson
Douglas Straley
Meghan Hurt
Michelle Ramaker
William Dunn
Patrick Dean
Dr. Latitia McCane
Andy Armstrong, (Designee)
Jeb Wilkinson, (Designee)

STAFF PRESENT:

Angela Kelly-Wiecek, Chief Deputy Commissioner
Donna Carvana, Assistant Director
Jennifer Hynson, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant
Andrew Johnson, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant
James Edmunds, Program Support Technician
Cierra Morgan, Program Support Technician
Tereza Edwards, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chair Dudley Harris called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed the council and new members.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Grant Shmelzer stated that the Registered Apprenticeship Program did a great job with the Outstanding Apprenticeship Awards.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

September 2024 meeting minutes were approved through a voice vote after a duplicate name was removed and the spelling of a last name was corrected.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Donna Carvana, Assistant Director of Registered Apprenticeship updated the council about Registered Apprenticeship's minimum standards update. Registered Apprenticeship needed to update the minimum standards to align with Virginia Code. The code was changed/updated to accommodate the new existence of Virginia Works as well as the new structure of the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Donna Carvana also gave a presentation to the Council members about Registered Apprenticeship reciprocal agreements. Under revised § 29.13(b)(7) all registered programs are eligible for reciprocal approval, for Federal purposes, upon request. Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors seeking reciprocal approval must meet the wage and hour provisions and apprentice ratio standards of the reciprocal state (Virginia). To register in Virginia, a company must: hold a valid Virginia Business license, employ at least one valid Journeyworker, sign and adhere to Virginia Minimum Standards of Apprenticeship, and develop of works process for at least one occupation and register apprentices within 45 days.

Donna Carvana requested that the Council assist with the following items regarding reciprocity: adherence to VA code and Minimum Standards, VA State business license, Journeyworker ratios, graduated pay scale, minimum wage (increase to \$12.41), apprenticeship data collection and verification, YRA apprentice working for an out of state company, and licensure exemption.

Donna Carvana asks the Council to help develop a Reciprocal Policy that clearly outlines expectations for all parties and allows companies to enjoy the benefits of registering in Virginia while making the process transparent/efficient. The Virginia Apprenticeship Council agrees to create a small but effective work group (subcommittee) to look at reciprocal policies that have been established by other State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAA) states and recommend that would ensure the integrity and reputation of the Commonwealth. The subcommittee will contain the following people: Dr. Jameo Pollock, Grant Shmelzer, William Dunn, David Johnson, and one or two members of the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) team. This subcommittee was approved through a voice vote.

Angela Kelly-Wiecek spoke to the Council about exam exemption. She addressed a few concerns that people have been having about the new exempt from examination process. Registered Apprenticeship has a triple-check verification process for ensuring the quality and integrity of

Registered Apprenticeship programs. First, Registered Apprenticeship Consultants (RAC) register a participant with an Apprenticeship Agreement Form (AAF). The RAC clearly explains that every program must have a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job training (OJT) per year and 144 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) per year.

When an apprentice is ready to complete a program, the RAC verifies that the apprentice has completed both their OJT and RTI required hours. The RAC then sends the signed AAF and RTI transcript to the Program Support Technician at HQ (currently James Edmunds). Upon receiving the completed AAF the Program Support Technician verifies that the apprentice has completed their 2,000 of OJT and 144 hours of RTI (per year). After verifying that the apprentice completed their apprenticeship, the apprentice will be completed out of RAPIDS, and they will be awarded their “Red Stamped” AAF. The “Red Stamped” AAF serves as proof that an apprentice has completed their Registered Apprenticeship Program and will allow the apprentice to sit for licensure. This “Red Stamped” AAF also allows the occupations that are exempt from examination (Electrical, Plumbing, and Mechanical (HVAC) to receive licensure without testing.

Angela also informs the Council that Virginia Works will be embarking on a robust and encouraging communication and engagement program in 2025 to ensure that all employer/sponsors are properly informed.

REPORTS:

Virginia Works:

Nicole Overly, Commissioner of Virginia Works, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of Virginia Works:

Nicole Overly provided all members of the Virginia Apprenticeship Council a hard copy of the Virginia Apprentice Council 2023-2024 Annual Report. This report provides an accurate summary of a lot of what the VAC has addressed over the course of the past year as well as up-to-date metrics (as of 11/21/24). Registered Apprenticeship currently has 14,568 active apprentices (this includes apprentices that live in Virginia but work in a National Program) and 1,867 registered employer/sponsors.

During National Apprenticeship week, the Registered Apprenticeship team hosted or participated over 25 events. One of these events was a pilot of a webinar for employers that was about the employer view of Registered Apprenticeship and the target audience were people who did not know much information about Registered Apprenticeship. This webinar had over 400 participants and the audience were very engaged in the chat.

To accomplish our goals, Virginia Works’ Registered Apprenticeship team has identified 6 key focus areas for the upcoming year:

1. Continue integrating Registered Apprenticeship into the local workforce ecosystem, with a focus on partnership with each of the Business Services teams that operate locally to conduct outreach and training for new and existing employer sponsors.

2. Register and train at least one intermediary in each workforce area and at least one per target high-demand industry, including helping Federal intermediaries become Virginia intermediaries, especially in high-demand industries.
3. Implement proactive communications for sponsors about the apprenticeship processes and updated approaches to handle high volume of sponsor activity as the program grows.
4. Implement “braided funding” approaches with partner agencies to increase attractiveness of Registered Apprenticeship and incentives for employers.
5. Implement and update minimum standards for all programs.
6. Ensuring compliance with Federal standards for every Registered Apprenticeship program in the Commonwealth

Nicole also shared with the Council the current top 25 occupations of active apprentices in Virginia:

1. Electrician
2. Pipe Fitter (Construction)
3. Plumber
4. Heating & Air Conditioning Mechanic & Installer
5. Cosmetologist
6. Machinist (Alternate Title: Precision Machinist)
7. Optician Dispensing
8. Line Installer-Repairer
9. Maint Mechanic (Any Ind) (Alternate Title: Industrial Maintenance Mechanic)
10. Set-Up Technician
11. Nurse Assistant Certified (CB)
12. Welder, Arc
13. Line Repairer
14. Machinist, Outside (Ship)
15. Sheet Metal Worker
16. Electrician, Maintenance
17. Shipfitter (Ship & Boat)
18. Carpenter
19. Rigger
20. Pipe Fitter (Ship & Boat)
21. Environmental Control Syst. Instal/Services (HVAC)
22. Barber
23. Nail Technician
24. Construction Mining Equipment Technician
25. Structural Steel Worker (Alternate Titles: Ironworker or Structural Ironworker)

Division of Registered Apprenticeship (Virginia Works):

Donna Carvana, Assistant Director of Registered Apprenticeship, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of the Division of Registered Apprenticeship:

Donna Carvana stated that she has been working with Nicole Overly on the 2025 strategic plan for Registered Apprenticeship. One of the goals of this strategic plan is to allow for Registered Apprenticeship Consultants to work with their new partners that are in their Virginia Works office.

Registered Apprenticeship is also in the process of updating wage schedules to reflect the increase in minimum wage (increase to \$12.41 on 1/1/25).

Registered Apprenticeship has also hired four new employees (three of them working for the grant team):

1. Regina White-Kee – Grant Specialist
2. Jane Harrington – Grant Partner Alignment Coordinator
3. Tereza Edwards – Service Trades RAC (Apprentice)(Grant)
4. Claudia Williams – Related Technical Instruction Education Specialist

The current Grant Manager, Cesily Means, is also leaving Registered Apprenticeship this Friday (12/6/24) and RA is actively looking for a replacement. RA is also working on updating all employees EWP (Employee Work Profile). These EWPs need to be updated to incorporate new duties and to reflect the changes of RA moving from the Department of Labor and Industry to Virginia Works.

Action Item: Study the Minimum Standards that were provided and have comments ready for the next VAC Meeting.

Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (DPOR):

Jeb Wilkinson, Assistant Director for DPOR, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of DPOR:

The board is creating Hearing Aid Specialist Registered Apprenticeship as a possible pathway to licensure. DPOR would like to coordinate with Virginia Works so they are prepared in the event someone wants to do one of these apprenticeships.

Tattoo and Body Piercer Apprenticeships are currently overseen by DPOR. DPOR would like to move this to Virginia Works as a Registered Apprenticeships. This would require a regulatory change and outreach to the respective communities. This was attempted in 2018 but significant opposition arose over the paying minimum wage requirement.

Ongoing Initiatives

EPICx

- We're excited to share that DPOR is actively focusing on licensing improvements and ongoing configurations.
- Licensing Improvements: We're making great strides in streamlining our licensing procedures to make them more efficient and user-friendly as we continue to work towards Wave 1 launch in March of 2025.
- Ongoing Configurations: Our team is continuously fine-tuning our systems to ensure optimal performance and adaptability to meet our goals.

Application processing and Backlog

- Currently, all applications received by the agency have their initial review completed within an average of 5 days.

Total regulant population as of November 1, 2024 – 325,168

Virginia Community College System (VCCS):

Dr. Jason M. Williams Sr., the Coordinator of Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning programs at VCCS in the Workforce and Academic Division provided the following written report to the council:

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has been awarded \$1,125,000 M. from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP), Vision + Capacity-Building Grant in expanding Work-Based Learning (WBL) for 21 Vision Grants for our colleges in the amount of \$25,000 and to provide Capacity-Building Grants of \$150,000 to Tidewater Community College (TCC) and Patrick & Henry Community College (PHCC). Both colleges have completed their visioning grant, next is to scale our work-based learning programs.

WBL TRACKING SYSTEM (WTS) The WTS has subscriptions derived from Salesforce, The WTS is a separate system for tracking WBL data to include: Student Demographic Data, Employer/Business Contact Information, Community, College (CC) Data/Information, System Office Data/Information, all CCs WBL Local, Regional, and State information

The WTS will be made available to all VCCS colleges ensuring system-wide access and consistency. The WTS has external-facing digital processes critical to implementing industry-related templates, data models, and digital process automation, thereby enhancing VCCS's ability to connect with businesses and employers.

Department of Education (DOE):

Andy Armstrong spoke to the council on behalf of the Department of Education.

In August, the state board adopted a new accountability framework called the School Performance Report framework. Part of this framework revolves around SOLs and accreditation. This also includes a high school readiness indicator that is called the Three E Readiness Indicator. This is going to incentivize school divisions to provide students with opportunities in employment, enlistment, and enrollment. In the work-based learning space, the DOE had their first review this week to work toward a new strengthening and high-quality work-based learning program. DOE will be receiving a lot of feedback from the field in the weeks to come.

Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI):

Gary Pan, Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of DOLI:

I am pleased to be here on behalf of the Department of Labor and Industry in our efforts to continue our support for the Virginia Works Apprenticeship program. I commend the work being done by the Program to facilitate and encourage the acquisition of new job skills for thousands of Virginians as we all work together for a better future for Virginia.

In addition to my general enthusiasm for the mission of apprenticeship, it is especially interesting to me at DOLI as workforce safety is an important and integral part of apprenticeship and supported through safety and health training. Our department has started a new initiative called “**What IF**” which is to encourage employers and employees to have a goal of safe workplaces which yield injury free careers for Virginia’s workforce. Apprenticeship training is a strong component of achieving that goal and DOLI is and will be working to advance that the vision of careers that are injury free. It should be noted that because of our confidence in the apprenticeship training’s impact on safety, our child labor law section has worked with DPOR and the Department of Education to allow minor workers to participate in some workplaces if they are in a Registered Apprenticeship program.

Since Virginia Works was created by the General Assembly in July 2023, DOLI has worked in a strong cooperative and collaborative manner to help “lift and shift” the RA program from DOLI to the new agency. From July 2023 until the end of FY 24, DOLI’s Business services division has supported the RA portion of Virginia Works for such functions as HR, Finance and IT. Since the beginning of FY25 this support has properly transitioned but as recently as this week DOLI did its final fiscal transfer to RA. DOLI’s website is still the host and webmaster for the RA program, and we look forward to seeing that fully migrate to the Virginia Works website so that we ease access for stakeholders to engage with the Virginia Works.

DOLI’s vision of working to move Virginia’s workforce towards an Injury Free career culture continues to get stronger and more effective. We are moving forward with establishing the first Virginia Institute of Learning and Outreach (VILO) whose purpose and role will be to provide safety and health workforce training to further strengthen business performance across Virginia in businesses, government agencies, and contractors. We expect many of those that utilize this facility (located in the Virginia Public Safety Training Center (VPSTC)) in Hanover County to be in the RA program. In addition, our Labor Law division continues to streamline the youth work certification process through electronic means. In fact, DOLI has aggressively moved to modernize our processes to further ease stakeholder access for services and to drive internal process efficiencies. We would be happy to share our experiences with other sister agencies as well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Harris and the VAC voted on the dates for the quarterly meetings, and they are as follows:

March 20th, 2025

June 26th, 2025

September 25th, 2025

December 4th, 2025

Chair Harris announced that all 2025 meetings will take place at Virginia Works HQ – Holland Tower – 2221 Edward Holland Dr, Suite 500, Richmond, VA 23230 from 10am – 12pm.

Chair Harris thanked the Council, and all in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Dudley Harris, Chair
Nicole Overly, Commissioner and Secretary

APPENDIX

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