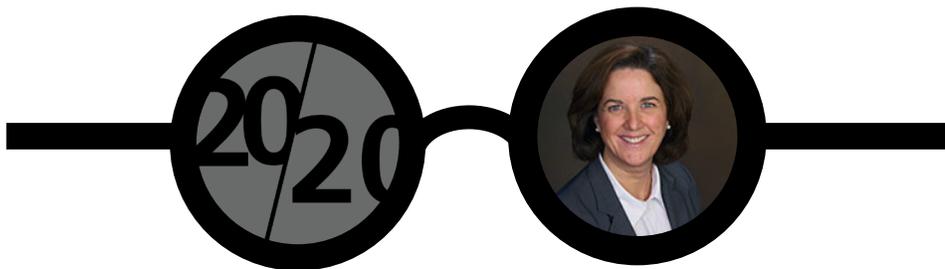


Bridging the Vision

with Joanne Huebner



Is Hindsight 20/20?

The [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#) was signed into law in 2014, took effect in 2015, and accountability began in 2016. The federal legislation that has become the way of life for adult education and literacy will celebrate five years of existence in 2020. In hindsight, is WIOA accomplishing its goals? Are we making strides to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market? Are we matching employers with the skilled workers that they need to compete in the global economy? How does hindsight play a role in moving us forward?

I would like to suggest that Virginia had a running start on WIOA. Under Governor Tim Kaine’s administration (2006–2010), then-Secretary of Technology Aneesh Chopra began a multi-partner, high-tech initiative called PlugGED In. The graduation of its first class took place in July 2009 with 100% of graduates attaining their GED® credential, career readiness certifications, and community college credits—and thus, PluggedInVA was born. Teri Barnett (p.3) talks about how a meeting with Mr. Chopra in 2013 transformed the way she thought about programming for English language learners in Northern Virginia. She shares the peaks and valleys of creating and dissolving partnerships that can affect access to high-quality training for ELLs. Read her reflection and “lessons learned” on pages 3-4.

Continued on p.2>>>

- **P1**
Bridging the Vision
- **P3**
Will it Stick?
Developing Adult Education
Workforce Strategies
- **P5**
Collaboration is the Key to
Success with CWIA
- **P7**
Meet Dollar General Literacy
Foundation’s Student of the
Year: Bushiri Salumu
- **P11**
Growing a Partnership:
SHINE and Middle River
Regional Jail
- **P16**
The PRACEP Para Pathway
- **P18**
Adult Education Connection
- **P20**
Speaking Up for Adult
Education: Champions for
Sector Strategies and Career
Pathways
- **P23**
Virginia’s Team WorldEd Wins
XPRIZE Achievement Award
- **P24**
A United Voice
- **P25**
PROGRESS Calendar

PROGRESS

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>>>Continued from p.1

Adult education became the proverbial home for PluggedInVA, which is featured prominently in WIOA as a model to accomplish its goals. Across the Commonwealth, we find examples of WIOA's influence on our collective mind shift in providing meaningful educational and workforce services to underserved populations. Ginger Hilleary (p. 16) shares how she came to the realization that providing services to employers in the rural areas of Piedmont may mean creating viable career pathways for the skilled workers they need in places that have not been explored in the past. Mallory Hill provides an example of a unique regional collaboration to provide wrap-around services and support through blended funding in Appalachia that "sets students up for success that will last" on pages 5-6. Vici Garber (featured in **PROGRESS** for her work with the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities grant) continues to amaze me as she heeds yet another call of WIOA to serve as vice-chair of the Harrisonburg Rockingham Page Reentry Council and chair of the Central Shenandoah County Reentry Council. Read this "SHINEing" example of supporting transition for incarcerated adults while building a new network of community agencies on pages 11-13.

Clearly, adult education in Virginia has evolved and grown under WIOA, continuously turning lessons learned in hindsight into 20/20 vision for new opportunities for those we serve. We quietly and tirelessly lead the way. This fall, six adult education leaders have taken on the role of Academy Champions for Virginia's Sector Strategies & Career Pathways (SSCPA) initiative (p.20) This leadership Professional Learning Community (PLC) is meeting virtually with Dr. Kate Daly Rolander, Workforce Instructional Specialist at the VALRC, to learn about and promote developments in the SSPCA initiative, sustaining the momentum using the voice of adult education as an anchor.

Much has been accomplished in the few short years since WIOA was signed into law; its goals are being met. This issue of **PROGRESS** showcases many success stories and examples of adjusting the vision along the way. Adult education and literacy in Virginia is, and will continue to be, a formidable leader in moving WIOA into the future. 

Joanne Huebner is the manager of the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC). She leads the team of educational specialists in carrying out the VALRC mission of equipping the field of adult education and literacy with essential skills and resources.

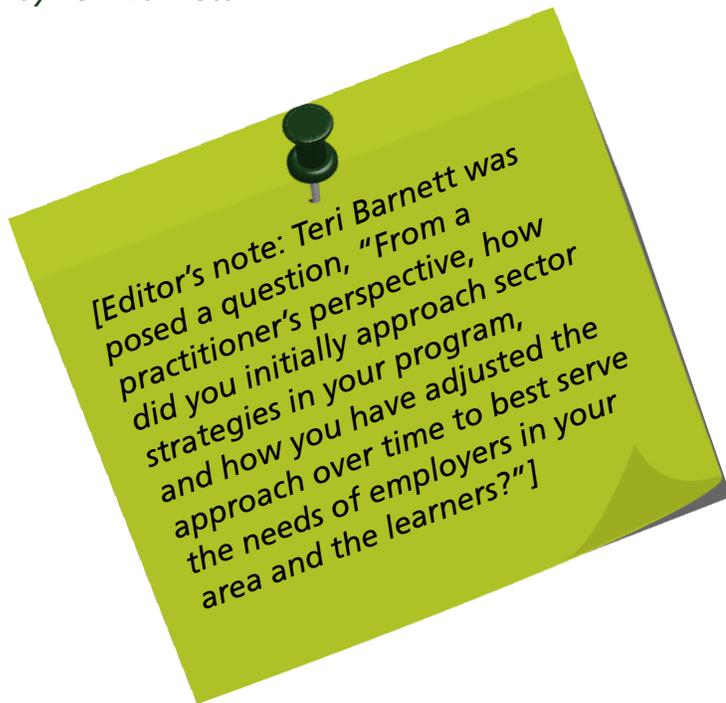


VCU

Will it Stick?

Developing Adult Education Workforce Strategies

by Teri Barnett



The Beginning

The academic and workforce development needs for adult education learners in Northern Virginia (NOVA) are remarkably different from any other region in the state. Our learners, regardless of the program, are about 95 percent English language learners. They represent a cross-section of skills, careers, economic backgrounds, and education. Last year's demographics for my program at Alexandria City Public Schools Adult Education Program showed that our students in federally-and state-funded programs were about 85% female, came from 33 different countries, and spoke 70 or more languages. Educationally, 1% had a college education, 8% finished college, and 91% did not complete high school. Career-wise, like across much of Northern Virginia, our students work in demanding low-wage, unskilled jobs such as

hospitality, food service, and housekeeping. Often these jobs compete with improving their English or GED® skills due to long work hours and the high cost of living in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. With this, I have always been mindful of the requirements of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and the Adult Education Family and Literacy Act (AEFLA) whenever I generate a new program.

Back in 2013, a gentleman by the name of Aneesh Chopra requested to meet with me to discuss a program called PlugGED In. During our meeting, I could barely focus on the conversation because I was befuddled trying to figure out why the former U.S. and Virginia Secretary of Technology was really in my office talking to me about this program. Little did I know that he was the architect of PluggedInVA, which was initially started with Adult Education Program Manager Linda Allen at Southwest Community College. After researching the program and reaching out to Linda Allen and Kate Daly Rolander (both of whom proved to be excellent mentors), I developed the one-and-only PluggedInVA program in NOVA. Focusing on the medical industry, our students would earn a credential and training to become clinical data medical coders or phlebotomists.

I was elated. I had buy-in from my school district, made flyers, and recruited GED® students. Per Aneesh Chopra's introduction, I met with Northern Virginia Community College's (NVCC) Medical Campus provost, who was on board and extremely helpful. He arranged meetings with his administrative team. NVCC arranged for our students to have on-site

Continued on p.4>>>

>>>Continued from p.3

instructors to teach two for-credit courses. We became eligible training providers through our local Workforce Development Council.

The Transition

Just when I thought we were flying high, we were sidelined. The NVCC administrative team decided we could no longer be a part of the medical campus due to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools™ Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accreditation guidelines. They recommended the workforce side of the community college, which had fewer restrictions. Now, all of our students had to work toward the pharmacy tech credential. This seemed perfect because we now had CVS pharmacy as our industry partner.

Unfortunately, many students lost interest in the pharmacy tech program after earning their GED® credential. It was evident that our scope was limited. Students were interested in the medical field but just not in becoming a pharmacy technician. We had limited options via NVCC's workforce program, plus they were no longer making their instructors available to us. Our advocate, the Provost, had retired, and we were running solo. After shuttering PluggedInVA, I continued a variety of workforce development career training programs that included partnering with Dominion Power and Goodwill Industries to create a Utility Groundsmen Program, a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) learners' permit course, and the ServSafe Level II certification. Our successes were small, with two or three students earning a credential and gaining employment.

Today

With all regions responsible for creating multiple Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, I have decided on taking a different route. A local hotel is interested in hosting contextualized English classes for their housekeeping staff and we are waiting for the partnership agreement. This summer, I provided a Microsoft Office Suite Word and Excel class and job-readiness training for 12

AEFLA students in partnership with our local One-Stop Employment Resource Center (now known as Virginia Career Works Center). We now offer the Microsoft Office Suite course to the administrative support staff in my school district and to our One-Stop Employment Resource Center. I have come to realize that our students could articulate information learned but transferring that to tests was a challenge. Therefore, it is important to teach academic vocabulary and to include informational text and ELA/CCRS standards in instruction at all levels. ✓

Lessons Learned

1. Study the industry trends in your region.
2. Determine attainable credentials that meet industry trends.
3. Find willing nontraditional partners.
4. Get your staff certified to teach the course.
5. Stay open and network often.
6. Think like a business person.
7. Have a roadmap.
8. Finally, if it doesn't stick, try and try again.



With close to two decades of experience as an educator, Teri Barnett offers a unique blend of leadership, vision, and knowledge. She holds an MEDL and a professional school administrator's license. For the past nine years, Teri has lead the Adult Education Program of Alexandria City Public Schools as Coordinator and currently as the Director. Through her leadership, she has created a variety of programs that serve approximately 1,000 adults from over 30 countries annually through English Language Learners, GED®, GED® Corrections, ISAEP, the Adult High School Diploma, and various workforce development programs.

Collaboration is the Key To Success for CWIA

by Mallory Hill



Career Coach Trey Hall, Success Coach Mallory Hill, Instructor Jason Spears, CDL Coordinator Joey Yates, CDL Graduate Greg Seals

The [Center for Workforce and Innovation of Appalachia \(CWIA\)](#) is quickly becoming a leader in creating successful, skilled adults who are entering or reentering the workforce. Located in Appalachia, Virginia, the CWIA is a workforce-solutions-driven location of Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) and offers multiple courses including Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training, power lineman, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), drone courses, welding, construction, and dental assisting. Space in the CWIA is also utilized by [Regional Adult and Career Education of Lee, Scott, Wise,](#) and [Norton Public Schools](#) which offers basic education courses, as well as partnership programs primarily through the Road to Success in Virginia Program (RSVP). This partnership has already led to the success of several students and is expected to do the same for many more.

The RSVP grant makes unique learning and support opportunities available for qualified students. Students are able to enroll in the program based on being eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The accepted students enroll in either CDL, CNA, customer service, or construction courses. While

they are in these courses, they work with Regional Adult and Career Education staff on basic skills or work towards a GED® credential if they have not achieved a high school diploma. The partnership with Regional Adult and Career Education provides students instruction in digital and financial literacy that leads to various certifications. Students also work with a career coach and a behavioral therapist to establish skills needed to join the workforce and remain successful in their employment once they have done so. The CNA cohort is currently running at the CWIA following the successful completion of the first RSVP CDL cohort.

CDL training has been offered through MECC since 2017. In July 2019, the course was offered as part of the RSVP grant to add additional basic skills and career training, as well as services to assist with non-academic barriers to success. In the case of the CDL students, the main barrier was lack of funds for transportation to get to class and back. For this, they received.

Continued on p.6>>>



CDL students with RACE1 Instructor, Judy Samples



Michael Lewis during pre-test examination



Rodney Tritt in MECC's CDL truck. He passed his CDL and began employment the next day.



Mallory Hill is an Education Support Specialist at Mountain Empire Community College. She is the Grant Coordinator and Success Coach for the Road to Success in Virginia Program meant to assist students with any non-academic barriers to success. Mallory possesses a B.A. in history, a B.S. in psychology, and an M.S. in educational psychology.

>>>Continued from p.5

RSVP funds to offset their transportation expenses. Student Support Services also helped with food from the food pantry on the main campus. Because of the excellent instruction provided by CDL instructors, skills taught by the Regional Adult and Career Education, and wrap-around services to promote success during the course and after, all seven CDL students passed their driving exam. Of those seven, four have obtained employment and one is continuing his education in welding. The same success is expected for the upcoming cohorts.

The key to the success of these students, and future students, is collaboration between the Virginia Community College System, Mountain Empire Community College, and Regional Adult and Career Education. Support from the Virginia Community College system has allowed Mountain Empire to offer unique support systems. The collaboration with Regional Adult and Career Education results in program planning that sets students up for success that will last. The expertise of Regional Adult and Career Education, combined with a student-driven mission and top-notch faculty and staff of MECC, have led and will continue to lead to improved quality of life for students. 📍

Meet Dollar General Literacy Foundation's Student of the Year: Bushiri Salumu

by Elizabeth Severson-Irby

This year at the [ProLiteracy conference](#), Bushiri Salumu was named Dollar General's Student of the Year, an award given to an outstanding adult learner. Bushiri is that and more, and his story is one of resilience, perseverance, and courage. He was born and grew up in the Democratic Republic of Congo with eight brothers and sisters. His father was a family medicine physician and his mother was a teacher with a degree in chemistry. Bushiri loved to play soccer and dreamt of becoming a cardiologist. However, in 2007, all of this changed when Bushiri lost both of his parents and six of his siblings due to civil war.

At the age of 17, Bushiri, his sister, and his brother, aged 15 and 13 respectively, joined many others fleeing the civil war. For eleven months, the group of refugees walked day in and day out to get to a refugee camp in Zambia—a distance of about 1,000 miles. For four years, they lived at the camp, oftentimes in overheated, overcrowded tents. Finally, on October 17, 2012, Bushiri and his two siblings resettled in Charlottesville, Virginia.



Continued on p.8>>>

>>>Continued from p.7

Bushiri's story does not stop there. Since coming to the United States in 2012, he has learned English, obtained citizenship, earned his high school equivalency diploma, and acquired his certified nursing assistant (CNA) license. Bushiri recounts his experience when he first arrived in the United States:

“

I came directly to Charlottesville to the [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#). The government helped us with food stamps and Medicare for about eight months and paid for housing for four months. Since I was the head of the household, they helped me find a job three weeks after I got here. They referred us to English classes. Before I took English classes, they referred me to a speech pathologist. In Congo, it was hard for me to speak because my stutter was terrible. But when I came here, they tried to help me. But that did not help at first, because when I don't understand the language, I don't know how to speak. But now, today, that I know English, I try to meet with my speech pathologist every month. Now my stutter is so much better.

”

Government assistance was vital when Bushiri and his siblings first arrived, but he also noted how hard it was to be ready to pay for housing four months after arriving in the U.S. Trying to work, save money, and learn English was a difficult, demanding challenge. At times, his education had to take a back seat so he could work to save money:

p.8

“

By taking English classes, I learned simple greetings. After that, I was transferred to [Thomas Jefferson Adult and Career Education \(TJACE\)](#). I took some classes there, but I was working full time at the car wash. After a few months, I stopped taking classes and was working two full-time jobs so I could save money to buy a car. My second full-time job was house-keeping. After I bought my first car, I went back to school and took three classes there. I passed math, science, and social studies, but my time [work schedule] interfered with the time the learning center met, so I was directed to the literacy volunteers. When I came here [[Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle](#)], I was able to pass my last GED® test. I took some citizenship classes here so I could get my citizenship. Then, they suggested that if my dream was to be in the medical field and [I] didn't have any experience, it would be better if I started with [the] CNA. Then I signed up for CNA classes with PVCC (Piedmont Virginia Community College). I also still take English classes.

”

Without the cooperation of several services and educational programs, Bushiri may not have received the help and support he needed to learn English and to further his education. He believes he would be further along in his goals if he were able to make education his primary focus:

“

For many people, if you have the chance and a sponsor to pay for your food and housing, then it is better to just go straight to school. Because if I went straight to school, then maybe after seven years of being here I could have my Bachelor's [degree].

”

But Bushiri is grateful to everyone who helped him along the way. He noted that many people contributed to helping him get to where he is now:

“

I can say I have had a lot of support from IRC, TJACE, and the literacy volunteers. The tutors helped me with academics and gave me advice, strategies, and ideas on how I could pass the exams, but also gave me advice on life. Then, I had a friend that I met with; he was a tutor with TJACE. I met him in 2016 and he is the one that has helped me a lot. He tutored me in math, science, and social studies.

”

He also noted that along with academics, he had a lot to learn about American culture:

“

The culture we came from, when you talk to someone that is older than you, you don't make eye contact; you would get in big trouble if you did. So I had to learn how to make eye contact. Then, in my culture, someone who is the same age as your mother or father, you call them 'mother' or 'father.' Here they would say, 'I am not your mom.' So, I had to learn that too. They tried to give us education at the IRC to help us learn these things. I also had help from the literacy volunteers and the people at TJACE.

The school system I came from is very different; we don't get a chance to use computers. So the big challenge is computer skills. Kids here, they have help typing and finding resources. But there is no specific program to help adults with typing. I think that, if I had enough money, I would want to open a center to help adults that have a dream to go to school.

”

From computer skills, to life skills, to academics, to speech therapy, to English classes, Bushiri emphasized how important each program was in aiding him to get to where he is today. He is thankful for all of the encouragement and support each program provided. However, he also mentioned how important it was for him to be patient with the process:

“

The first thing is to be patient. Because this country is a country of opportunity, if you have a dream, the first thing is to be patient. And then to know what kind of group you can be associated with to help you. And then go to school so you can find a better job.

”

Bushiri plans to continue his education to include a Bachelor's degree and a Nurse Practitioner license. He loves his current job as a neonatal CNA and wants to continue working in that department:

“

My next step is to be a neonatal nurse practitioner. I am working in the neonatal unit now; it is a very emotional job. We work with 22-week to 27- or 30-week old babies. Usually they are in bad condition. I have support in my job to help me. I work Friday-Sunday; Monday-Thursday I am taking pre-classes for nursing. My next license will be [the] RN, then bachelor's [degree] two years after that. After that, nurse practitioner.

”

Continued on p.10>>>

About the Dollar General Literacy Program

"J.L. Turner was functionally illiterate with only a third-grade education. His father died in an accident, and J.L. quit school so he could work on the family farm and help provide for his family. With hard work and determination, J.L. Turner went on to co-found Dollar General.

In 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation was established in his honor. [They] understand that life can present many obstacles, but [they] also know it's never too late to learn! Like J.L., so many others desire to better their lives and the lives of their families and it's in this spirit that the foundation has flourished.

[Dollar General] grant programs are available to qualifying organizations in the 44 states where Dollar General stores are located.

[They've] awarded more than \$160 million in grants to literacy organizations that have helped more than 10 million individuals learn to read, prepare for the high school equivalency, or learn English. [They] believe that everyone deserves an equal opportunity to receive a basic education. It's never too late to learn."

About Us. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.dgliteracy.org/about-us/>

>>>Continued from p.9

Before we concluded our interview, Bushiri said, "I feel so lucky to be a part of this community and have all of their support." It is adults like Bushiri that keep us doing what we are doing and show how important adult education is. His story also highlights the importance of partnerships and cooperation among different programs and agencies. Without their combined support, Bushiri may have been limited in what he thought was possible; now, there is no stopping him. 📍



Elizabeth Severson-Irby is the literacy specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC). In her role, she provides leadership for instruction and program management in Virginia's adult education and literacy programs, working with both public and private agencies and educational programs to ensure that adults have access to the educational resources they need.

Virginia is currently undertaking an initiative to "align education and training programs in ways that make it easier for individuals [like Bushiri] to access and complete pathways to family-supporting careers."

The Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy (an online learning academy for Virginia's Workforce Professionals) seeks to "strengthen the leadership capacity of workforce system partners and practitioners to incorporate sector partnership and career pathway strategies and thinking as integral components into every Virginia region."

To learn more, see p. 20 or visit the [Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy website](#).



John Lilly of Middle River Regional Jail receiving the Outstanding Workplace Partnership Award from VAACE Awards Chair, Alice Graham, Region 20

Growing a Partnership: SHINE and Middle River Regional Jail

by Vici Garber

In August of 2017, Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education (SHINE) decided to focus on the previously untapped population—citizens reentering the local community. Through an established partnership with the local Probation & Parole office, SHINE was able to connect with John Lilly, the program director at Middle River Regional Jail (MRRJ).

Middle River Regional Jail had its own independent GED® program, and it was not SHINE's intent to interfere with their long-standing program. Instead, SHINE sought to create a seamless pathway for inmates who were unable to obtain their GED® credential while incarcerated to transition into the region's adult education programs upon release. We asked for a slice of pie and were served a huge chuck! SHINE was invited to participate in MRRJ's twice-a-month reentry class, allowing SHINE to distribute information and answer questions about adult education opportunities to soon-to-be-released inmates.

Continued on p.12>>>

>>>Continued from p. 11

During one meeting, John Lilly stated that if SHINE wanted to be taken seriously in the local corrections landscape, adult education needed to be represented at the Central Shenandoah Valley Reentry Council (CSVRC). The regional specialist, Vici Garber, immediately joined the CSVRC meetings, exposing SHINE to a new network of community agencies and exposing those agencies to the services offered by the regional adult education programs.

Mr. Lilly mentioned his interest in the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) and inquired whether SHINE could provide testing to the MRRJ inmates. The regional specialist is a CRC proctor; therefore, SHINE could offer to test the inmates. However, to be able to count the learners as adult education participants, we recommended classes be created to help inmates prepare to be successful on the CRC. John Lilly was immediately on board with creating classes. The only obstacle was that the Staunton-Augusta Adult Learning Center (ALC), the local SHINE provider, had not planned their budget with these new classes in mind.

Along came the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) innovation grant! In January 2018, the ALC coordinator wrote the grant and SHINE was awarded the

Innovation Grant to provide Career Readiness Certificate preparation classes to inmates within Middle River Regional Jail. The short period of time in which the region had to spend the funds put the partnership in the unusual position of having extra funding to use, leading SHINE to approach John Lilly to discuss “dream services” that we might be able to offer at the jail. John Lilly requested an ABE-level pre-GED® class. With limited space within his GED® class, a pre-GED® class would allow those on the waitlist to receive GED® prep services.

SHINE’s pilot program for the pre-GED® class was helpful for MRRJ. The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment allowed John Lilly to know who was immediately ready for GED® testing and who needed to be next in line to add to the GED® class. Sadly, SHINE lost an instructor who had been perfect for teaching this population, and the innovation grant ended. Although the program did not survive past the grant period, SHINE and MRRJ recognize the need for a pre-GED® class and are working towards reinstating this program.

In March 2018, SHINE held its first CRC classes but ran into unforeseen complications including one cohort’s loss of all the learners within two weeks. This early setback

could have ended our new partnership. Luckily, John Lilly allowed Vici Garber to do damage control. He was able to get the learners back in the classroom under new instruction, and the class thrived with engaged and committed learners.

With good results from the initial CRC classes, the ALC budgeted to continue the classes without the innovation grant funds and is currently serving its fifth CRC cohort. With each new cohort, SHINE adjusts to improve the classroom experience, creating a community that inspires impressive soft skills and academic performance. This is a win for SHINE, MRRJ, and most importantly, for the inmates who are served.

At VAACE in 2018, Vici Garber attended a workshop held by Rebecca Scott (Region 1). After hearing about her pilot PluggedInVA program for the incarcerated, an inspired PluggedInVA Coordinator approached MRRJ about providing a cohort. John Lilly immediately responded with a “Let’s make this happen!” SHINE also partnered with Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) with the intent to utilize the logistics curriculum that had been created by SHINE and BRCC through the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) Grant.

With several meetings to figure out the logistics and internet issues, SHINE started forging relationships throughout the different departments of MRRJ. Together MRRJ and SHINE recruited, researched, sorted, and chose the inmate candidates for the cohort. Selection criteria included, but were not limited to, sentence, release date, previous attendance in SHINE's CRC classes, MRRJ staff recommendations, and TABE scores. Ten inmates were chosen for the pilot program.

The first PluggedInVA Logistics cohort was held in 2019 (January–April). The core team of the SHINE regional specialist (who also instructed CRC preparation, Northstar Digital Literacy, soft skills, and job acquisition skills), the BRCC logistics instructor, and John Lilly continued to develop a partnership of trust that was crucial to problem-solving the challenges of any new pilot. Additional relationships were created with the administration and other departmental staff, solidifying SHINE's presence in the jail.

During this time, the Regional Specialist participated on two reentry councils with John Lilly. Today, Vici Garber serves as vice-chair of the Harrisonburg Rockingham Page Reentry Council and the chair of the Central Shenandoah County Reentry Council. Because of John Lilly's advice to join those councils, SHINE has a leading role in the corrections and reentry network throughout Region 6 and is connected with partners who might not otherwise have had access to SHINE's services.

Though our initial PluggedInVA did not generate the numbers we desired, John Lilly wanted the cohort to run again. Fortunately, SHINE received the PluggedInVA grant to fund another cohort, planned for January 2020.

SHINE and MRRJ have forged a solid partnership. We have brainstormed other avenues where SHINE can serve MRRJ's population. Together, we hope to help make positive activities like education and workforce preparation a focus for incarcerated individuals and reduce recidivism.

Together, SHINE and MRRJ have presented as a team at VAACE (2018–2019), AE&L (2019), and the first VADOC conference (2018). This year, John Lilly was awarded VAACE's Outstanding Workplace Education Partner! It was a pleasure for SHINE to be able to celebrate this ever-growing partnership. 📍



Region 6 Regional Specialist and PluggedInVA Coordinator since 2015, Vici Garber started her career with adult education in 2001 with a focus on employment services. She has previously worked as an independent GED® tutor, an employment specialist, and an ESOL instructor. Through the Shenandoah Initiative for Adult Education (SHINE), she has served as an instructor for GED® classes, job readiness, and PluggedInVA and as a co-teacher for Blue Ridge Community College's logistics program.



Guided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Virginia's Combined State Plan, content at the conference will concentrate on five key theme areas:

- Career Pathways
- Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Workforce Preparation
- Standards-Based Instruction (SBI)
- Removing Barriers

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2020 Vision for the Future



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Humorist, Master Teacher*

Panel Moderar



*Dr. Sharon Johnson,
Chief Executive Officer,
Shenandoah Valley Workforce
Development Board Inc.*

Mini-Institute



*KayLynn Hamilton,
Senior Research Faculty Assistant,
Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy
Penn State*

Mini-Institute



*Dr. Jen Vanek,
Director, Digital Learning & Research,
EdTech Center @ World Education*

Mini-Institute



*Jayme Adelson-Goldstein,
Educational Consultant,
Lighthearted Learning*

Mini-Institute



*Connie Rivera,
Educational Consultant,
Sustem for Adult Basic
Education Support*

Luncheon Speaker



*Bushiri Salumu,
Dollar General 2019
Student of the Year*

February 19

Leadership Panel

Wednesday will begin with a plenary panel moderated by Dr. Sharon Johnson and featuring regional employers. In *An Industry Perspective on Partnering for Talent Development and Workforce Solutions*, the panelists will discuss their hiring strategies and talent development processes, how those strategies and processes change with the economy, and their partnerships with training providers and workforce development agencies.

Wednesday afternoon workshop sessions will be partnership-focused offering a glimpse into successful initiatives and promising collaborations.

February 20

Mini-Institutes Student-of-the-Year

Thursday will be instruction-focused. Workshops will address the key theme areas for this conference and provide tools, resources, and insights for increasing student engagement and learning.

National experts will facilitate six mini-institutes designed to offer more intensive professional development offering effective practice and hands-on tools that can be used in the classroom.

Virginia's own Bushiri Salumu, Dollar General's 2019 Student of the Year, will be recognized and honored during the mid-day luncheon.

February 21

Keynote Speaker Group Events

Friday's final session will feature motivational keynote speaker, Dr. Adolph Brown, III (Servant Leader, Author, Humorist, Master Teacher) who will encourage and inspire us with his message of *We've Gotta Reach Em' to Teach Em'TM Every Student, Every Day!*

Learn and laugh with the outrageous motivation and highly-interactive educational delivery of Dr. Adolph Brown as he takes on a journey of socio-emotional learning (SEL). Dr. Brown demonstrates how SEL matters by showing how the connective capacity of good educators lead to student success and retention with field-tested strategies.

His keynote session is designed to greatly increase student achievement across ethnicity, gender, language, and supplemental educational services (SES). With music, motivation, and profound messages, this is a message that will inspire, ignite, and excite all who attend.

Specific groups will then meet to address the charge of "Building Together".

Mini-Institute



Adora Beard,
State Relationship Manager,
GED Testing Service®

Mini-Institute



Susan Pittman,
Educational Consultant,
E-learning Connections

Group Event



Wendy Scheder Black,
College & Career Transitions Manager,
Adult Basic Education for
College & Career,
Pima Community College

Group Event



Mary Jo Chmielewski,
IBEST Instructor & Coach,
Adult Basic Education for
College & Career,
Pima Community College

The PRACEP Para Pathway

by Virginia (Ginger) Hilleary



Three years ago, Piedmont Regional Adult and Career Education Programs' (PRACEP) Regional Specialist exclaimed, "We need to have a Plugged-In cohort this year!" There was only one problem: what were we going to do? Other regions had Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and welding and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) programs, all of which sounded great. I asked myself, "What is needed? Where do we start?" Time was of the essence and as a new program manager, I was hesitant to step too far outside my comfort zone. What I knew was teaching, teachers, and teacher's aides (education paraprofessionals or para-educators or "paras"), so that is where I began.

Fulfilling a Need and Creating an Opportunity

Researching employment statistics revealed that school systems are often one of the largest employers, especially in rural regions. All of the counties in our region (9), as well as those bordering us, had multiple openings for paras - plus these jobs offer benefits and can be a springboard to a career in education. But more than anything else, becoming a "para" would give our participants the opportunity to work as part of an education team and carry the moniker of "professional."

Background

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, a para in a Title I school must have a high school diploma or GED® credential, an associate degree or two years of postsecondary education, or pass the paraprofessional (ParaPro) certification. A candidate must also pass a background check and be CPR/ First Aid certified. Beyond that, orientation and training for the position in our region was non-existent (due to funding issues), and an unscientific survey of human resource departments estimated failure rates for the ParaPro exam at 30-40%. All of this meant that the need was there, and so was the opportunity to create a pathway to a career.

Developing the Program

To make the cohort work, we needed to develop a curriculum, find industry experts, get instructors, leverage partners for workforce activities, and find space. Our priority was to engage a program coordinator (Joyce D'Urso) who worked with staff to create program guidelines based on education best practice and the requirements for the ParaPro test. We also involved a high school equivalency (HSE) instructional advisor (Ericka Pirtle) who provided guidance for our participants and kept them on track to GED® credential completion. Fortunately, we could "mine" our instructional staff for much of the expertise needed for training, as many of our instructors had worked with paras in a variety of classroom settings.

Our coordinator reached out to our local Virginia Career Works center for help with interview skills, resumé writing, and job search proficiency. In our second year, we also added a project management mini-course to help with team-building skills.

Recruiting

From the beginning, our goal was to have anyone who started the program, finish the program. We explained our program to our local Workforce Development Board and Business Services Team and asked them for referrals. Even though we used social media to get the word out, experience taught us that the best way to recruit was through face-to-face meetings where we could fully explain the program and requirements of a participant. This was both time-consuming and exhausting, but after two years of working through the program, it is, for us, the best recruiting tool. We also met with church leaders, services to abused families (SAFE), superintendents, civic groups, and other organizations.

Calendar and Scheduling

Our process included intake, a lengthy interview, and an assessment. We made it very clear that this was a demanding program. The calendar that we gave each participant dis-

played six months of activity, showing that if they stayed with the program and committed to doing the work; participants could receive their GED® credential, an industry-recognized credential (ParaPro certification), First Aid/CPR training, and a digital literacy certificate, as well as training in working with students with learning challenges and in child abuse recognition and intervention.

As our participants worked their way through the program, it was amazing to see growth in both their skill level and confidence. Our first group named themselves the "PIVA Pioneers," and they set the bar for our para program. Both groups participated in our graduation ceremony, where they presented their capstone project. They shared their experience, and what came through was how much each of them had grown and changed. At the first graduation, every one of the "pioneers" was offered a position in the schools. Three of our "grads" are enrolled in community college, and all are employed.

This year PRACEP will offer two para cohorts in different parts of the region. We are, once again, actively recruiting for another group of participants who will touch our hearts and prove once again that (to quote W.B. Yeats), "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." 📍



Piedmont Regional Adult & Career Education Program's (PRACEP) Regional Program Manager, Virginia (Ginger) Hilleary is enjoying her fourth year with the organization. Prior to this, she served as Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Fauquier County for 14 years. Ms. Hilleary is one of the founders of the Commonwealth's annual literacy conference, and in 2014 she received the Nancy Jiranek Award for exceptional leadership from the Virginia Literacy Foundation for her continued contributions to the cause.



Adult Education Connection

by Karen Gent



Derek Keene of Grundy dropped out of high school in his senior year. Even though he made “decent grades”, he became discouraged and lost his motivation to finish. At the urging of his parents, he enrolled in Southwest Regional Adult Education’s GED® preparation class at the Buchanan County Career & Technology Center in June 2017. He attended for a short time, became sick, and quit going to class.

Two years later, in June 2019, Derek entered a program at The Laurels in Lebanon. One of his counselors there recommended that he, again, attempt to work toward earning his GED® certificate. At this point in Derek’s life, he saw this as an opportunity to get his life together so that he could be able to move forward and accomplish goals that would improve his future.

On July 19, 2019, Derek Keene entered my classroom doors for the first time. I discovered Derek to be extremely dedicated, motivated, and focused when it came to his studies. Derek said that he benefitted from the class not just by earning his GED® credential, but also by thinking about his future and what his next steps would be. He appreciated the relaxed but very supportive environment of the adult education classroom.



Derek has been highly successful in the adult education program. His greatest challenge was the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test, but he studied hard and attained a good score on that subject test. Derek said that working in GED® Academy, an online preparation program, and working in the textbooks provided by the program were very helpful in improving his skills. In just five weeks, with class meeting only three days a week, Derek passed all four of the GED® subject tests and earned his GED® certificate on August 22. Not only did Derek earn his GED® credential, he was also able to increase his educational functioning levels in both reading and math, which is one of our most important program goals.

“This was the first step I needed to take in moving forward.” Derek said. “I didn’t expect to get my GED® that quickly. I thought it would probably take at least six months, but it was much shorter.”

Through the process of attaining his GED® credential, Derek felt very encouraged and supported by the staff at The Laurels. Not only did the staff provide emotional support, but they also provided transportation for Derek to get to and from class each day. He reflected that the whole experience has been life changing for him.

After accomplishing his primary goal of earning his high school equivalency

credential, Derek continued attending my class and prepared to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Derek studied the WorkKeys curriculum and passed the three necessary subject tests with scores high enough to earn a gold-level NCRC.

What’s next for Derek Keene? Derek will soon be moving back home to Grundy. His first priority is to get a job, and then he wants to make plans to attend community college focusing on earning a degree in some field of science, which just happens to be his favorite subject.

Southwest Regional Adult Education congratulates Derek on his success in our program and his high GED® test scores, which indicate college-readiness! If someone has not finished high school, it’s not too late. Adult education is all about second chances and reaching goals. Anyone could be the next GED® success story! 📍



Karen Gent is the lead teacher for Southwest Regional Adult Education. Karen has been an adult education instructor for the past 15 years with a focus on Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs since 2009. Karen is the editor and primary writer of the “Adult Education Connection”, a newspaper column appearing in five weekly newspapers in Southwest Virginia, and is the recipient of the 2016 VAACE Joan E.D. Kushnir Teacher of the Year Award.

Speaking up for Adult Education: Champions for Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

by Kate Daly Rolander

How exactly can adult education strengthen the workforce development system? To help clarify just how foundational adult education services are to the development of a strong and adaptable workforce, six representatives from the field of adult education are participating as advocates for the field of adult education through their roles as Champions in the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy (SSCPA).

The Career Pathways Work Group, a collaborative working group of representatives from Virginia's workforce development agencies, have established a shared definition of career pathways and sector strategies as a means of following through on the state's workforce mission to "drive Virginia's economic growth by implementing an effective and efficient workforce system that delivers innovative, integrated, data-driven products and services that meet the needs of businesses and job seekers."¹ The SSCPA comes from this work. The overarching goal of the Academy is to "strengthen the ability of workforce system partners and practitioners to incorporate sector partnership and career pathway strategies thinking as integral components in every Virginia region."²

The field of adult education is in a unique position to offer a deep and data-driven understanding of what an integrated career pathways system can do for adult learners and of how adult education practices

can lead to higher levels of retention, learning gains, and ultimately, gainful employment. This statewide initiative aims to bring together Virginia's nine workforce development agencies and twenty-four workforce programs to develop a shared understanding and an integrated approach to planning and implementing sector strategies and career pathways across the state. The adult education champions will play a vital role in leading regional teams to springboard new initiatives and to support sector- and pathway-driven partnerships.

How SSCPA Champions fit into the SSCPA Structure

Sector strategies, sector partnerships, and career pathways are proven approaches for helping job seekers find middle-skilled jobs and for helping employers to find skilled workers. The SSCPA offers foundational skills and knowledge that will help our workforce professionals better serve job-seeking. It also offers opportunities for workforce teams to hone their skills with new practices and partnerships. The Academy includes face-to-face and online content, culminating in regional peer workgroups who can use what they've learned throughout the Academy to implement sector strategies, including career pathways, that may then become promising practices to share across regions.

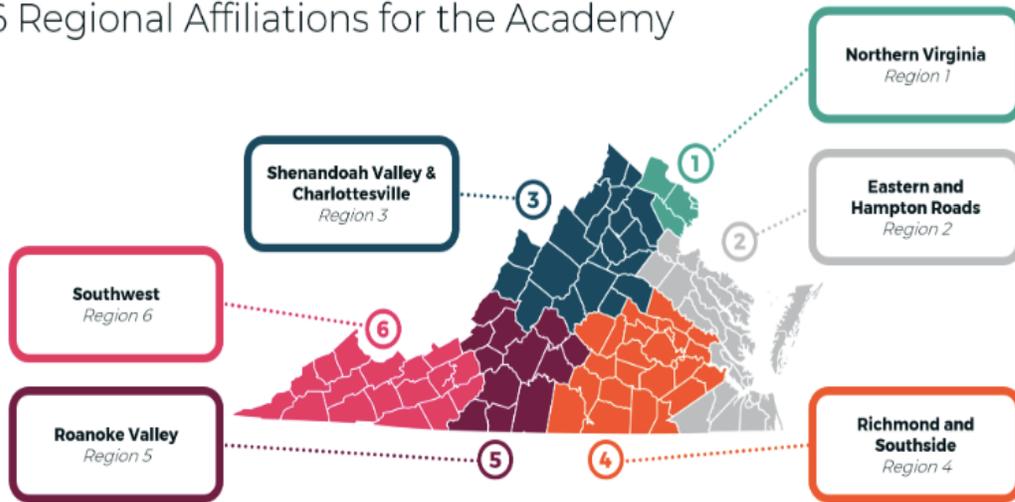
¹ Commonwealth of Virginia Combined State Plan, Publications and Initiatives, <https://virginiacareerworks.com/publications-initiatives/>

² Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy Foundations Training Presentation, November 2019

The Champions will be active participants in all phases of the Academy, including leading online discussion forums during the coursework, supporting the facilitation of the face-to-face Foundations course, and serving as leaders of regional peer workgroups to ensure adult education is included in important workforce development discussions and new collaborations.

SSCPA has developed a regional approach to delivering the Academy and for developing interagency peer workgroups. The six regions in this map are each represented by one Champion from adult education. Additionally, each adult education region is required to have a representative complete the SSCPACoursework.

6 Regional Affiliations for the Academy



The Virginia Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy

This table lists our six Academy Champions by adult education and SSCPACoursework regions. Their roles in leading discussions and spearheading regional workgroups are essential in operationalizing sector strategies and career pathways models to collaboratively engage all workforce development agencies in the integration of services to best meet the regional needs of job seekers and employers. The Champions engage in additional training beyond the SSCPACoursework curriculum and participate in regular calls to stay up to date with developments in the initiative and to prepare for implementing peer workgroups in their regions to tackle workforce development needs through an integrated approach that includes adult education services. The adult education representatives in our first cohort of champions represent a wide range of experiences in IET, partnerships, and program development for diverse student needs. Their perspectives will help shape the SSCPACoursework initiative beyond the coursework and into practice.

SSCPA Region	Adult Education Region	Champion
1	8	Courtney Lord
2	22	Amy Shockley
3	6	Katy Parrish
4	19	Barbara Brown
5	11	Luke Sancheo
6	4	Diane Gray

Virginia's adult education programs continue to develop and deliver innovative programming to expand education and occupational training access to increasingly diverse populations of Adult Learners.

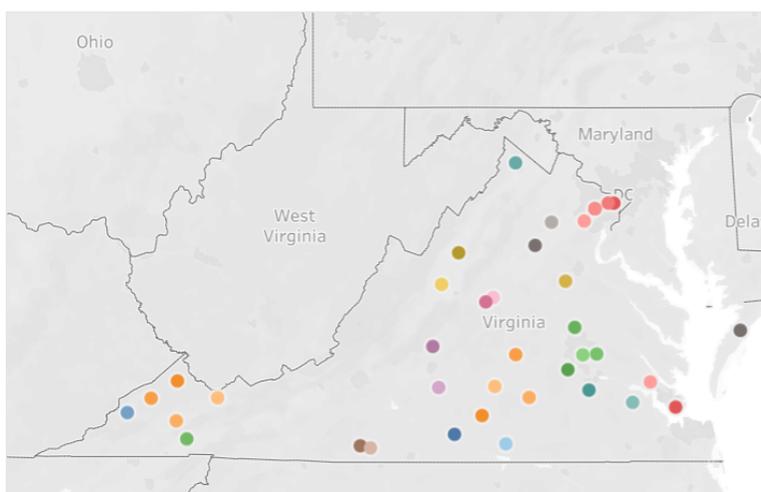
IET Programs in Virginia

Sector strategies and career pathways are not new ideas in Virginia. Our PluggedInVA framework has run as a model career pathways program since 2009 and has sustained strong partnerships with training providers and workforce agencies in many of our regions. An increasing number of regions have partnered with the Virginia Employment Commissions Trade Assistance Act office to deliver just-in-time IET programs. ([See the April 2019 PROGRESS issue](#) for information on TAA Navigators who can work with adult education programs to implement TAA IET offerings.) Additionally, collaboration with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) has resulted in innovative co-teaching IET programming and occupational training to serve adults with disabilities.

Virginia's adult education programs continue to develop and deliver innovative programming to expand education and occupational training access to increasingly diverse populations of adult learners. This year, the Career, Technical, Agriculture Education (CTAE)

Locality Map | IET by County | IET Data 2019-2020

Virginia IET Programs for 2019 - 2020



[The Virginia IET Blueprint](#)

Through integrated delivery systems with our workforce partners and local employers, adult education's role in workforce development continues to expand. An important role of the Academy Champions is to sustain this momentum via this statewide initiative by communicating to our partners the expertise, the resourcefulness, and the readiness of adult education programs to strengthen workforce development systems through services that meet the unique needs of adult learners.

Virginia IET News and Resources

The goals of the SSCPA align closely with adult education's goals for IET and partner collaboration, and throughout our regions, we have an abundance of examples and resources that point to our dedication to and readiness for sector strategies and career pathways thinking and program development. For more information on the SSCPA and to learn more about what has been happening in IET in Virginia:

- Visit the [SSCPA site](#) for great content, resources, training, and interagency discussion forums.
- Find resources on VALRC's [IET Blueprint site](#) our [Career Pathways page](#) on our main site.
- Read our [Summer 2017 Career Pathways themed issue of PROGRESS](#) with information about IET initiatives across Virginia.
- See the article on page 7 of the [June 2019 issue of PROGRESS](#) to learn more about the Academy from an adult education perspective.
- Check out page 11 of the [April 2019 PROGRESS](#) for IET innovations in Region 21. The introductory article of this issue also details a long-standing partnership at Mountain Empire Community College in regions 1 and 2.

For more information about the SSCPA Champions and new developments in sector strategies and career pathways, reach out to your regional champion or to Kate Rolander at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at kedaly@vcu.edu. ✓



Dr. Kate Daly Rolander is the Workforce Education Specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC). She supports Virginia's development and implementation of career pathways programs, assists instructors and staff in tailoring instruction for workforce readiness, and coordinates the state's PluggedInVA programs.

Virginia's Team WorldEd Wins XPRIZE Achievement Award



On November 13th, it was announced at the [National Summit on Adult Literacy](#) that our Team WorldEd (Virginia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Texas) [won the Tier 1 achievement award for recruiting learners across the nation](#).

According to Silja Kallenbach, Vice President of WorldEd, our team reached more adults than the other teams combined! She went on to say that the prize award will be used to expand professional development and support of mobile learning in adult literacy. [Learn more about the Move Forward with Mobile Learning initiative by visiting its new website](#). Thank you to all of you who participated and for demonstrating Virginia's commitment to bringing digital literacy to our adult learners. ✓

A United Voice



The purpose of this section of **PROGRESS** is to raise awareness about important issues affecting adult education and provide informational talking points for workforce partner collaboration.

The National Association of State Directors of Adult Education (NASDAE)

[NASDAE](#) is a professional organization and source of information on supporting and advancing adult education. NASDAE publishes issue briefs on topical subjects of importance in adult education which give readers concise summaries describing all sides of an issue. Three recently published issue briefs are The Higher Education Act, Ability to Benefit, and Perkins V. As topics that relate directly to adult students are best communicated at the classroom and program levels, it could be helpful to read these briefs and discuss them with your workforce partners and adult students.

The Higher Education Act

“The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) authorizes numerous federal aid programs that provide support to both individuals pursuing a postsecondary education, including adult students, and institutions of higher education. Title IV of the HEA authorizes the federal government’s major student financial aid programs, which are the primary source of direct federal support to students pursuing postsecondary education.” Because low-income students have faced rising costs and other challenges since the last reauthorization of the Act in 2008, Congress can improve the law to increase students’ odds of success. As Members of Congress debate HEA reauthorization, it would be advantageous for them to focus on principles critical for the success of low-income students: affordability, racial equity, and connecting students to high-wage, high-demand jobs and careers. Read more about reauthorizing the Higher Education Act in this [NASDAE issue brief](#).

Ability to Benefit

Ability to Benefit or ATB is a provision of the federal financial aid law that “allows low-income students without a high school credential to apply for funding to pay for postsecondary education and training.” Students must meet eligibility requirements and demonstrate a financial need. ATB provides an opportunity for students to earn a college certificate or degree, land a well-paying job, and move up economically, regardless of academic background. Read more about Ability to Benefit and how it related to adult students in this [NASDAE issue brief](#).

Perkins V

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins V) requires a portion of each State plan relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education. Given the clear connections in Perkins V and Title II of WIOA in terms of career pathways, efforts should be aligned to provide on-ramps to postsecondary education and training for adult education populations. Read more about Perkins V in this [NASDAE issue brief](#). 

2020 PROGRESS CALENDAR

DEC

4–6 [Hire Education Conference](#)
Hot Springs, VA

4–7 [Association for Career and Technical Education \(ACTE\) Conference](#)
Anaheim, CA

23–JAN 3 VCU Winter Closing (VALRC offices closed)



JAN

9–10 [Virginia Association for Career & Technical Education \(ACTE\)2020 Leadership Seminar](#)
Richmond, VA

27 VALRC Winter Term Begins
Facilitated Online Courses
[Foundations of Reading: Meaning Skills](#)
(Pilot 5-week course)
[ELPs and Adult Educators](#)
(6-week course)



MAR

13–14 [Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics \(VCTM\) Conference](#)
Richmond, VA

16 Program Manager Webinar
(1:30 p.m.–3:00 p.m.)

30 VALRC Spring Term Begins
Facilitated Online Courses
[Developing Writing Skills in Adults \(Newly Revised\)](#)
[Numeracy in Adult Education](#)

31–April 3 [TESOL 2020 International Convention & English Language Expo](#)
Denver, CO



FEB

19–21 [Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Conference \(AE&L\)](#)
Harrisonburg, VA

