



# Virginia Economic Development Partnership

## Board of Directors Meeting

September 18, 2025

The Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center

710 S Main St

Harrisonburg, 22801



## VEDP Board of Directors Meeting

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**DRAFT AGENDA**

**VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**The Hotel Madison  
Madison Board Room  
September 18, 2025  
9:00 AM TO 12:35 PM**

- 9:00 – 9:10 AM**                    **Welcome** – Dr. Anthony Tongen, VP and Chief Research Officer  
Division of Research, Economic Development and Innovation  
James Madison University
- 9:10 – 9:12 AM**                    **Welcome/Call to Order** – John Hewa, Chair
- 9:12 – 9:13 AM**                    **Public Comment Period**
- 9:13 – 9:15 AM**                    **Approval of Minutes for 06.12.25 Meeting**
- 9:15 – 9:20 AM**                    **Vote on Electronic Meetings Policy**
- 9:20 – 9:30 AM**                    **Chair’s Report** – John Hewa, Chair
- 9:30 – 9:40 AM**                    **President’s Report** – Jason El Koubi
- 9:40 – 9:45 AM**                    **Update on VEDP’s Advisory Committee on International Trade** –  
Will Sessoms
- 9:45 – 9:50 AM**                    **Report: Finance and Audit Committee** – TBD
- Vote on Consent Agenda:
    - FY25 Financial Results
    - FORVIS FY26 Risk Assessment and Audit Plan
    - IT Security Update
    - Extension Requests
    - Clawback Update
    - Semi-Annual Report on Incentive Compliance
    - COF Progress Report
    - Incentives Administration Policy and Procedural Guidelines Update
- 9:50 – 9:55 AM**                    **Report: Legislation and Policy Committee** – Todd House
- Election Update
  - FY25 State Revenues and FY26 VA Impact
  - Closed Session – Update on Budget and Legislative Priorities
- 9:55– 10:00 AM**                    **Report: Rural Virginia Action Committee** – Nick Rush
- Food and Beverage Lunch and Learn with Jay Langston

<b>10:00 – 10:15 AM</b>	<b>Update on the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership</b> – Megan Healy and Debbie Melvin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vote to Approve VTOP Marketing Plan</li> </ul>
<b>10:15 AM – 12:15 PM</b>	<b>CLOSED SESSION: Personnel; Top State for Talent; Data Center Coalition; Energy; Strategic Planning Metrics; Federal Impact Analysis</b>
<b>12:15 PM</b>	<b>Return to Open Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting</b>
<b>12:15– 12:25 PM</b>	<b>Anticipated Topics for December 2025 Board Meeting</b>
<b>12:25– 12:35 PM</b>	<b>Open Discussion (Board Roundtable)</b>
<b>12:35 PM</b>	<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>

**2026 Board Meeting Dates – Please Save the Dates:**

March 18–19 | June 3–4 | September 16–17 (*offsite, TBD*) | December 9–10



James Madison University

**DR. ANTHONY TONGEN, VP AND CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER  
DIVISION OF RESEARCH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION  
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**



Alliance Schooner, Yorktown - Hampton Roads

# VEDP BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 18, 2025

**Minutes  
Board of Directors of the  
Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority  
June 12, 2025  
9:00 a.m.**

**901 East Cary Street  
One James Center, Board Room – 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219**

**Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by John Hewa, acting chair in Bill Hayter’s absence. A quorum was present.

In-Person Board Members: Secretary Stephen Cummings, Stephen Edwards, Rick Harrell, John Hewa, Todd House, Pace Lochte, Connie Loughhead, Anne Oman, Will Sessoms, Steven Stone

Board Members Absent: Nancy Agee, Mimi Coles, Bill Hayter, April Kees, Sonya Montgomery, Nick Rush, Secretary Juan Pablo Segura

**Public Comment Period**

Chair Hewa solicited public comments. There were none.

**Approval of Minutes for March 6, 2025, Meeting**

Chair Hayter asked for approval of the minutes from the March 6, 2025, meeting. Upon motion by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Harrell, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Hewa welcomed the Board and guests. He explained that in Bill Hayter’s absence, he would be chairing the meeting.

**President’s Report**

Jason El Koubi, President and CEO, provided an update to the Board. A copy of Mr. El Koubi’s report is included in the meeting materials.

**Guest Presentation: Ryan Touhill, Director, Arlington Economic Development**

Mr. El Koubi introduced Ryan Touhill, Director of Arlington Economic Development. Mr. Touhill provided an overview of Arlington’s strategic strengths, including its proximity to Washington, D.C., and its accessibility from national and international locales. He also highlighted Arlington’s

economic strengths and challenges. He closed his presentation with a focus on Arlington's strong partnership with VEDP, and noted ways that VEDP can continue to support its local and regional partners.

A copy of Mr. Touhill's PowerPoint presentation is included in the meeting materials.

### **VEDP Staff Spotlight**

Sneha Atwal, Vice President, Manufacturing Division, introduced Mike Evranian, Director of Advanced Materials on the Manufacturing Team. Mr. Evranian briefly shared highlights of his career at VEDP, and discussed his transition to the Manufacturing Sector Team.

### **Report: Advisory Committee on International Trade**

Will Sessoms, Board liaison to the VEDP Advisory Committee on International Trade (ACIT), provided a brief update on ACIT's activities. ACIT met earlier in the week, and tariffs were the focus of the discussion. Each member shared their individual perspectives on how trade policy changes were impacting various sectors and regions. ACIT committee chairman Mike Lignon drafted a letter to Chairman Hayter and Chairman-elect Hewa outlining some of the major areas where ACIT sees potential impacts to Virginia. The letter outlines potential risks as well as potential opportunities. ACIT will continue to monitor the situation, and would be open to feedback as to any actions the Board would like the advisory committee to pursue.

### **Report: Legislation and Policy Committee**

Steven Stone, chair of the Legislation and Policy Committee, summarized agenda items from the Committee's June 11, 2025, meeting. The Committee did not make any recommendations that require Board approval.

### **Report: Finance and Audit Committee**

Rick Harrell, chair of the Finance and Audit Committee summarized agenda items from the Committee's June 11, 2025, meeting. These items included VEDP financial results through March 31, 2025, and updates regarding audit, IT security, clawbacks, and incentive performance.

Mr. Harrell presented the following consent agenda items from the Finance and Audit Committee to the Board for a vote:

- Accept: VEDP FY25 quarterly financial results for the six months ending March 31, 2025
- Accept: Clawback Update
- Accept: Quarterly Financial Results
- Accept: Proposed FY26 Operating Budget
- Accept: Extension Requests
- Accept: Audit Reports

Upon motion to approve the consent agenda by Mr. Harrell, seconded by Mr. Sessoms, the motion

was approved unanimously.

**Report: Rural Virginia Action Committee**

Connie Loughhead, in Mr. Rush’s absence, summarized agenda items from the Committee’s June 11, 2025, meeting. The Committee did not make any recommendations that require Board approval.

**VEDP Survey Update**

Mr. Stephen Hartka, Vice President of Research, provided an update on three significant surveys conducted by VEDP: staff Pulse Surveys, the Internal Support Function Survey, and the Annual Partner Survey. Details of the results of all three surveys are included in the meeting materials.

**Closed Meeting**

A motion was made by Mr. Sessoms and seconded by Mr. Stone to convene a closed meeting to discuss (1) elements of VEDP’s Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan, and Operational Plan pursuant to Subdivision A 50 of §2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, which allows for the discussion of such activities that would reveal to the Commonwealth’s competitors for economic development projects the strategies intended to be deployed, thus adversely affecting the financial interests of the Commonwealth and (2) personnel issues pursuant to Subdivision A 1 of §2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, which allows for the discussion of the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific employees of the Board.

Mr. El Koubi asked that VEDP staff be allowed to stay for the closed meeting for all matters except the personnel discussion. Chair Hewa agreed.

**Certification of Closed Meeting**

After the Committee reconvened in open meeting, Counsel certified the closed meeting via a roll call vote:

Do you certify, that to the best of your knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of FOIA were discussed in the closed meeting, and (ii) only such matters as were identified in the motion to go into the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered during the closed meeting?

Upon the vote:

Ms. Agee	Not present
Ms. Coles	Not present
Secretary Cummings	Aye
Mr. Edwards	Aye
Mr. Harrell	Aye
Mr. Hayter	Not present
Mr. Hewa	Aye
Mr. House	Aye

Ms. Kees	Not present
Ms. Lochte	Aye
Ms. Loughhead	Aye
Ms. Montgomery	Not present
Ms. Oman	Aye
Mr. Rush	Not present
Secretary Segura	Not present
Mr. Sessoms	Aye
Mr. Stone	Aye

**Vote on Closed Session Items**

Upon motion by Mr. Hewa, seconded by Mr. Harrell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Personnel Committee’s recommendations regarding compensation and contractual adjustments for the CEO, and to authorize Mr. Hewa to act on behalf of the Board to effectuate the recommendations.

Upon motion by Mr. Sessoms, seconded by Mr. Stone, the Board voted unanimously to accept the proposed FY26 Operational Plan.

Upon motion by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Mr. Sessoms, the Board voted unanimously to accept the proposed FY26 Marketing Plan.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, acting Chair Hewa adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

# APPROVAL OF ELECTRONIC MEETING POLICY

# CHAIR'S REPORT

September 18, 2025

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 18, 2025

# TOPICS FOR TODAY

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FY26 performance metrics to date

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FY26 Operational Plan – progress dashboard

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Notable developments since last meeting

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Top priorities for the next few months

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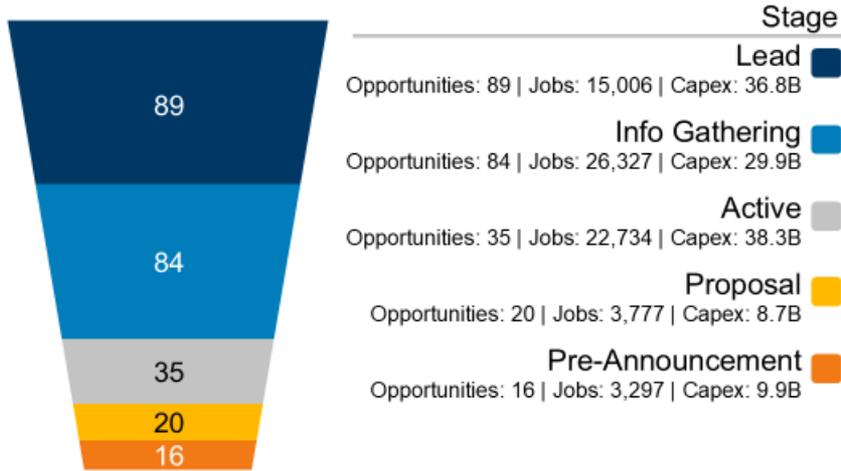
# PROGRESS AND PIPELINE FOR VEDP-ASSISTED PROJECTS FY26 TO-DATE JULY 1, 2025 – SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 (21.2% THROUGH FY26<sup>1</sup>)

## VEDP-Assisted Project Decisions

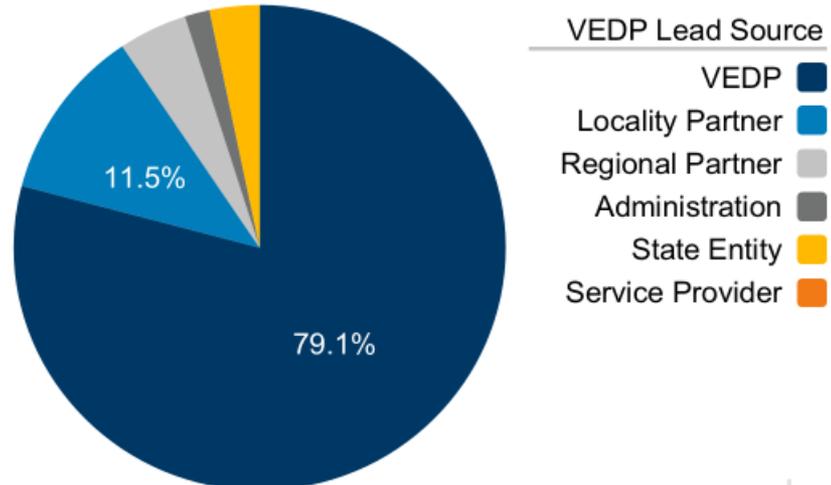
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## VEDP Open Pipeline (244)



## % of VEDP Leads for Open Pipeline



<sup>1</sup>Calculated by the number of weeks (out of 52) into the fiscal year

# VEDP'S INTERNATIONAL TRADE DIVISION IS ON TRACK TOWARD ITS GOAL OF ENROLLING 500 COMPANIES IN FY26

## International Trade Performance Metrics and Progress<sup>1</sup>

July 1, 2025 to September 3, 2025



### Takeaways

**41%**

Progress toward enrolling 500 companies in the current fiscal year

**\$1.5B**

International sales attributed to VEDP's trade programs during FY24, the most recent year data is available<sup>1</sup>

**13,787**

Trade-supported jobs from companies enrolled in VEDP's trade programs during FY24, the most recent year data is available<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Source: Survey of companies enrolled in international trade programs during FY2024 (63% response rate). Sales figures are based on self-reported estimates from participants and are not independently verified or validated with actual results. Methodology details may be found at <http://go.exportvirginia.org/methodology>

## FY26 OPERATIONAL PLAN TRACKER: MAJOR INITIATIVES (1 OF 2)

Major initiative	Owner (Supporters)	Status (% complete)	Progress to date
1 Strengthen Virginia's business development efforts and pipeline through enhancements to lead generation	Sniffin (Hartka, Watkins, Lead Gen Teams)	 15%	Aligned on a plan to update the Lead Gen. Strategy for FY27; generated lost project insights from a feedback loop discussion to inform strategy
2 Refine site consultant cultivation program to drive increased inbound opportunities	Begnaud (Sniffin, Collins, Miller)	 15%	Planned series of white-glove events, e.g. event with Gov. Youngkin in Richmond, the Secret Dinner with Team VA in Middleburg, and an FDI event in Germany
3 Advance ecosystem building priorities for core sectors, in partnership with key stakeholders	Sniffin (Devan, Watkins, Sector Teams)	 15%	Launched quarterly collaboration meetings with EC, Research, and Sector Teams
4 Support policymakers, partners, and the business community in navigating uncertainty due to changes in federal policy	Hartka (Farrelly)	 20%	Surveyed client- and partner-facing divisions to inform new approach to federal policy tracking; constituted a steering committee to provide oversight
5 Improve Virginia's energy competitiveness for availability, speed to market, rates, and prospect engagement	Devan (Dreiling, Akers, Goodwin)	 20%	Developed FY26 strategic energy focuses including leg. priorities, utility collaboration, and messaging; contracted with Oak Ridge National Labs to perform statewide evaluation of energy-ready sites
6 Invest strategically and increase collaboration to fast-track development of Virginia's competitive site portfolio	Dreiling (Patterson)	 15%	Awarded \$40M in FY25 VBRSP grants; developed preliminary sites list for accelerated characterization; continued to collaborate with the Site Dev. Taskforce
7 Advance a comprehensive Top State for Talent strategy to drive economic growth	Healy (Melvin, Stuller, Kang)	 15%	Hired three full-time staff to drive talent efforts and develop new V-TOP structure; held first V-TOP stakeholder group meeting

 On schedule to meet goals  Behind and/or facing challenge  May not meet goals

## FY26 OPERATIONAL PLAN TRACKER: MAJOR INITIATIVES (2 OF 2)

Major initiative	Owner (Supporters)	Status (% complete)	Progress to date
8 Execute VOEE's research agenda, including the next High Demand Occupations List	Kang	 15%	Hired a new VOEE Executive Director; completed initial draft of high demand occupations list for stakeholder review
9 Strengthen logistics solutions and expand air cargo and cold chain capacity	Jehu (Popoola, Watkins, Hartka)	 15%	Actively hiring two FTEs for the new Dulles air cargo initiative; holding recurring monthly stakeholder meetings with MWAA; kicked an off 8-week cold chain industry study with Port of VA
10 Enhance partner best practices and communicate economic development priorities to key stakeholders	Akers (Devan, Wescott, Watkins)	 15%	Launched new Local and Regional Competitiveness Initiative self-assessment survey; developing new engagement tracker for GA via Salesforce
11 Solidify Virginia's reputation as a leading state for innovation through marketing, branding, and ecosystem enhancements	Welch (Polk, Watkins)	 20%	Convened interagency Innovation District workgroup; enhanced innovation marketing focus through paid media and VIPC rebrand support
12 Enhance talent management and organizational development programs to foster a positive workplace culture and attract and retain top talent	Boone / Cox	 20%	Launched 2nd LEAD VEDP cohort; kicked-off Career Framework training; launched VEDP Spotlight series; provided training aligned to business needs (ongoing)
13 Conduct a comprehensive update of VEDP's website to align with current priorities and tactics	Begnaud (Harper, Hartka)	 10%	Kicked off discovery and user experience strategy phases in collaboration with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> -party consultant
14 Produce code-required update of the Strategic Plan for Economic Development of the Commonwealth	Devan (Watkins, Carroll)	 15%	Aligned on initial scope of work with Executive Leadership and developed partner engagement plan; began the Target Industry Analysis

 On schedule to meet goals  Behind and/or facing challenge  May not meet goals

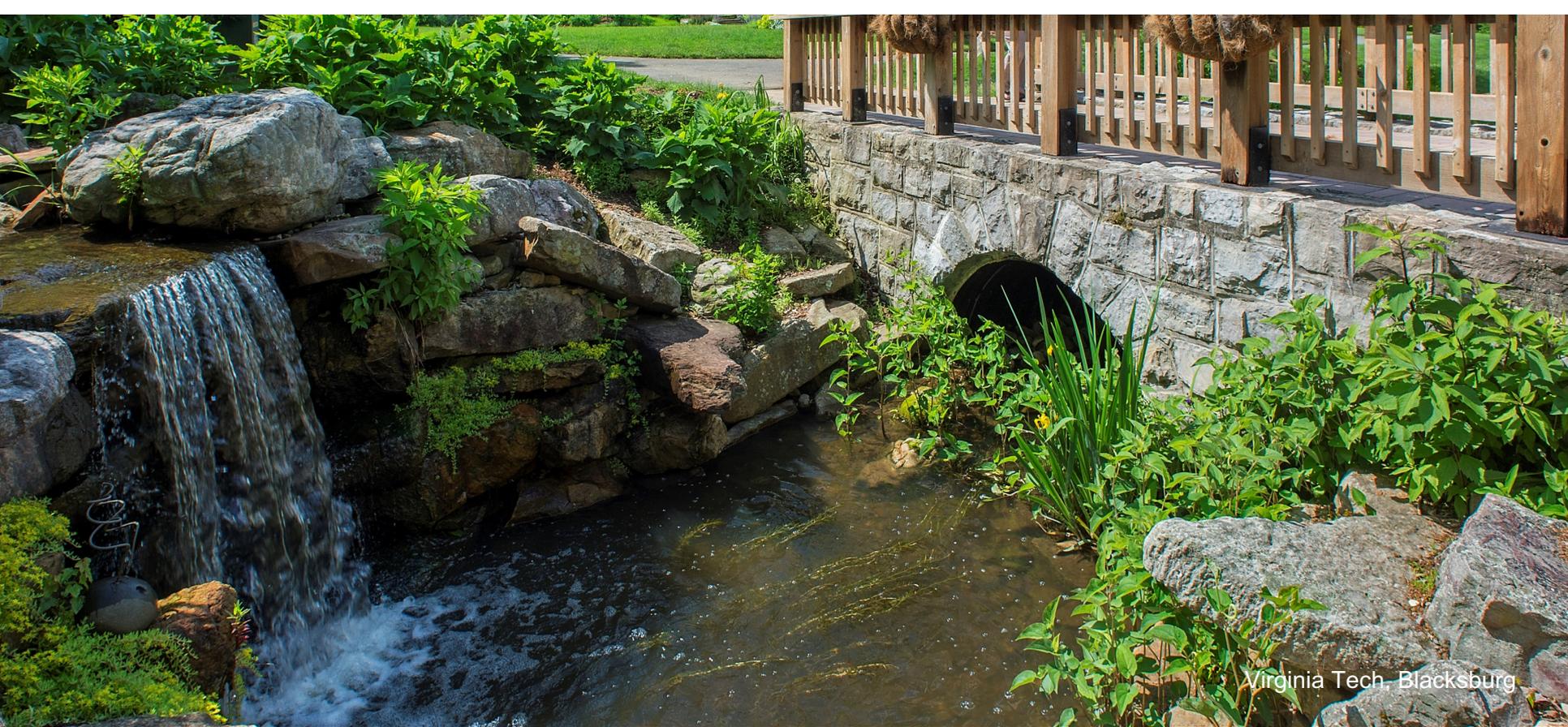
## NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS SINCE OUR LAST BOARD MEETING

- Achieved all key VEDP performance metrics for FY25, including \$15.6B in CapEx, 13,514 direct jobs, and 510 companies served by International Trade, despite major headwinds
- Secured several major economic development project wins for FY26, including Hitachi Energy (825 jobs) – with more to be announced soon
- Launched multiple high-profile lead generation and site consultant cultivation events, incl. site selector event with Talent Accelerator tour/testimonials and Governor’s reception
- Conducted successful Governor’s Marketing Mission to the Paris Air Show and London, holding 25+ meetings with target companies and prospective investors
- Earned top ranking from *Business Facilities* for the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program as No. 1 customized workforce training program for third year in a row
- Announced latest round of VBRSP grant awards – \$40M across nearly every region of VA
- Supported the Department of Taxation’s Market-Based Sourcing Workgroup, securing 17 private sector reps and highlighting impact on attracting major knowledge work projects
- Initiated media campaign with Fast Company and Inc. to position VA as an innovation hub via custom articles, digital ads, events, and lead gen in partnership with NOVA EDA and VIPC
- Secured Wendy Kang as Executive Director of VOEE; promoted Adam Watkins to VP, Economic Competitiveness and Debbie Melvin to VP, Talent and Partnerships
- Completed annual performance evaluations and FY26 individual goal setting
- Finalized and submitted VEDP budget and legislative requests for 2026 GA session

## TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

- Cultivate high-impact economic development projects and execute FY26 lead generation calendar with 55% more events vs. FY25
- Monitor evolving federal government actions, assess economic impacts on Virginia, and develop strategic responses and resources for business and partner-facing teams
- Advance Top State for Talent strategy, incl. Future Ready Talent AI launch (10,000 Grow with Google AI certificates) and V-TOP implementation to broaden employer engagement
- Conduct statewide office market study to inform redevelopment scenarios and policy recommendations in coordination with partners
- Implement FY25 VBRSP grant awards — \$40M across nearly every region of Virginia
- Advance VEDP budget and legislative priorities and develop strategy for legislative engagement
- Analyze Local and Regional Competitiveness Initiative (LRCI) survey data and provide REDO/LEDO benchmarking reports
- Conduct partner and staff engagement to inform FY26 Strategic Plan update
- Conduct Introduction to Career Framework training (Phase 1) and LEAD cohort 2
- Prepare for and engage in the gubernatorial transition process

# THANK YOU



Virginia Tech, Blacksburg

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

September 18, 2025



# V-TOP UPDATE & BOARD APPROVAL

September 18, 2025

# PRESENTERS



**Megan Healy**  
Senior Vice President,  
Talent and Workforce  
Strategy  
Virginia Economic  
Development Partnership  
mhealy@vedp.org



**Debbie Melvin**  
Vice President, Talent and  
Partnerships  
Virginia Economic  
Development Partnership  
dmelvin@vedp.org

# INTERNSHIPS ARE A KEY DRIVER OF PROGRESS ACROSS VEDP'S THREE CORE TOP STATE FOR TALENT STRATEGIES

## Retain and attract talent

Strengthen and highlight the Commonwealth's assets and economic opportunities to retain & attract the talent

## Develop talent and align to employer needs

Produce in-demand talent aligned with industry needs to create pathways to opportunity and build a thriving workforce

## Unlock individual potential by reducing barriers

Reduce barriers to workforce access (e.g., childcare, transportation) to ensure Virginians participate in the labor force



# WITH A \$6M APPROPRIATION, THE 2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY TRANSFERS EMPLOYER-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES OF V-TOP TO VEDP

Established in 2019 as a partnership between:



Funded through the Commonwealth Innovative Internship Fund and Program, with the purpose of:

- Expanding paid and credit-bearing **student internships** and other work-based learning programs
- Facilitating the **readiness of students, employers, and institutions of higher education** to participate in internships and work-based learning

## Transfer of responsibilities include:

- Business support services, including a matching grant for small businesses
- Outreach and marketing to employers

To facilitate this transition, SCHEV and VEDP signed an MOU and developed a **comprehensive plan\*** for the full transition and responsibilities of each entity.

\*Comprehensive plan will be finalized by October 1. Details to follow.

# THE BUDGET LANGUAGE ASSIGNED SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO VEDP

\$6M in FY26 | \$6M in each year thereafter



## Stakeholder engagement

- To design program activities

## Administer matching grant program for for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations

- Includes required training to qualify for a grant
- Eligible businesses have a physical presence in Virginia and 150 or fewer employees

## Coordinate regional collaboratives

- To serve as intermediaries for employers seeking to employ interns

## Marketing to employers

- To conduct initial outreach and marketing to increase employer participation in paid internship and other work-based learning programs
- Includes developing and implementing a statewide promotion, convening, and marketing program to encourage, assist, and recognize employers that increase employment of undergraduate student interns

## Measuring and reporting

- Program participation and progress toward identified goals through VOEE

# EMPLOYER-FOCUSED COMPONENTS OF THE NEW V-TOP MODEL RESIDE AT VEDP, WHILE SCHEV MAINTAINS HIGHER ED FOCUS

V-TOP Program Component	VEDP	SCHEV
Administer employer matching grants	✓	
Administer institutional grants		✓
Market V-TOP to employers	✓	
Manage student-employer matching platform	✓	
Recognize participating employers	✓	
Develop and report V-TOP metrics (VOEE)	✓	✓
Engage stakeholders for feedback	✓	✓
Support universities		✓
Leverage business outreach through regional partners	✓	

# VEDP AND SCHEV HAVE COLLABORATED ON THE EVOLUTION AND TRANSITION OF V-TOP RESPONSIBILITIES



# STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS (1 OF 2)

## Business Community

- Fafa Baker | Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
- Chase Barnett | Virginia Manufacturers Association
- Mike Guttman | Micron
- DaShana Kemp-Garnett | Newport News Shipbuilding
- Heba Mahmoud | MITRE Corporate
- Tavis Maxwell | Capital One
- Emily MacCartney | Virginia Natural Gas
- Tina Pfalzgraf & Jenna Paternoster | The Branch Group
- Anna Reed | CoStar
- Dennis Treacy | Seven Hills Strategy Group
- Michele Weatherly | ChamberRVA
- Michel Zajur | Virginia Hispanic Chamber

## Higher Education

- Barbara Blake & Sarah Jane Kirkland | Old Dominion University
- Julie Brown | Averett University
- Saskia Campbell | George Mason University
- David Lapinski | University of Virginia
- Randy Stamper | Virginia Community College System

## STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS (2 OF 2)

### State Leaders & Elected Officials

- Bryan Slater | Secretary of Labor
- April Kees | Senate Finance
- Kim McKay | House Appropriations
- Kirk Cox | Virginia Business Higher Education Council
- Nicole Overley | Virginia Works
- Cyndi Miracle | Virginia Chamber
- Wendy Kang | Virginia Office of Education Economics

### Workforce Development

- Shawn Avery | Hampton Roads Workforce Council
- Traci Blido | Virginia Career Works

### Government / Nonprofit

- Sara Dunnigan | VA Dept of Housing & Community Development (GO Virginia)
- Heather McKay & Laura Love | Strada Education Foundation
- Travis Staton | EO Companies

# VEDP IS MAKING PROGRESS ON ITS V-TOP RESPONSIBILITIES

Activity	Progress to Date
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Convened a group of stakeholders representing industry, workforce, and education for insight and guidance on the program</li><li>▪ VEDP and SCHEV will convene the stakeholders quarterly to solicit feedback and continue to improve the program</li></ul>
<b>Technology Platform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Partnered with the Strada Education Foundation to explore multiple technology platforms to connect Virginia students interested in internships with VA companies</li><li>▪ Internship marketplace will allow us to rapidly scale opportunities and placements</li></ul>
<b>Matching Grant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Working with VEDP’s Salesforce team to set up process to manage the V-TOP matching grant program in Salesforce</li></ul>
<b>Marketing Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Solicited proposals for a V-TOP marketing plan to increase employer engagement and internship opportunities across Virginia</li><li>▪ Marketing firm will develop the marketing strategy over the next 8-10 weeks, and a full campaign will launch in January and run through 2026</li></ul>
<b>Metrics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ VOEE supporting VEDP and SCHEV in establishing goals for the program and determining appropriate metrics and data sources</li><li>▪ Since the program is intended to expand paid and credit-bearing student internships and other work-based learning opportunities, and we do not have much baseline data, this has been a complex effort.</li></ul>
<b>Staffing Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Drafted job postings for several positions to support the program</li></ul>

# THE FY25-26 BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUIRES VEDP BOARD APPROVAL FOR KEY V-TOP ACTIVITIES

## V-TOP budget items that require VEDP board approval today:

Up to \$2,000,000 may be designated to conduct initial outreach and marketing to increase employer participation in paid internship and other work-based learning programs, including developing and implementing a statewide promotion, convening, and marketing program to encourage, assist, and recognize employers that increase employment of undergraduate student interns

- "Such amounts will be subject to approval by the Board of VEDP"

Other activities requiring VEDP board approval:

- VEDP may employ a program administrator
- Contract for professional services related to marketing and communications
- Take such other actions within its existing authority as it deems appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this paragraph and facilitate the partnerships and collaboration described herein
- "All activities and amounts are subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP"

At the recommendation of the stakeholder group, VEDP may enter into an MOU with Virginia Works to carry out the activities listed in paragraphs T.4. and 5. of this item; however, VEDP shall remain the fiscal agent for these activities

- "Such amounts to be authorized and the MOU will be subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP"
- **No request for the VEDP Board's consideration at this time**

**VEDP has received proposals from the two marketing firms already engaged in our talent retention & attraction strategy**

## **THE CAMPAIGN'S FOCUS WILL BE ON THE BENEFITS AND VALUE PROPOSITION FROM THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE**

The selected marketing firm will:

- Develop a **strategic marketing plan** for V-TOP aligned with VEDP's statewide talent objectives
- Leverage VEDP data to craft **targeted messaging** for different employer segments
- Build out Virginia's **internship brand**
- Develop an **employer recognition program**
- Secure endorsements by Virginia's top stakeholders to **amplify campaign reach and credibility**

The campaign will target **employers of all sizes and regions** and will include performance metrics and regular reporting.

The initial strategy is expected within 8–10 weeks of the contract award, with a full campaign launch planned for January 2026 and a 12-month execution period.

The estimated cost of the developing and executing the marketing plan is \$2M.

# BUDGET LANGUAGE REQUIRES THE VEDP BOARD TO APPROVE EXPENDITURES FOR MARKETING

## Code Requirements for VEDP Board Approval

- Approval of up to \$2 million for initial outreach/marketing to increase employer participation in V-TOP

Category	Expenditure Detail	Amount (\$)^
Staff Support	Sr. Marketing Manager position (salary and benefits)	133K
Plan Development	Research; strategy and plan development; message development; creative concepting; graphic design and copywriting; tactical execution and support; measurement, reporting, and optimization recommendations; employer recognition program; ongoing project management	410K
Media & Distribution	Paid media placement and digital advertising buys,	1.15M
Production	Creative production, video or photography, launch event and other tactics to be determined	250K
Outreach and Events	Employer-focused outreach and recognition events	57K
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2M</b>

**AMOUNTS ARE ESTIMATES**

^Marketing expenditures will be split between FY26 and FY27

# BUDGET LANGUAGE REQUIRES THE VEDP BOARD TO APPROVE OVERALL V-TOP ACTIVITIES AND AMOUNTS

## Code Requirements for VEDP Board Approval

- All activities and amounts are subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP

Category	Expenditure Detail	FY26 Amount (\$)	FY27 Amount (\$)
Marketing	Marketing services (plan development, brand and messaging, paid media, employer recognition program) (one-time^)	1.2M	800K
Personnel	Leadership, administrator, marketing, and 3 to 5 regional managers (salary & 40% benefits)*	525K - 790K	700K - 1.05M
Technology	Internship platform and Salesforce enhancements for matching grant management (one-time)	250K - 750K	-
Operations & Management	Staff support, travel, overhead, etc.	600K	600K
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2.6 - 3.4M</b>	<b>\$2.1M - \$2.5M</b>

**AMOUNTS ARE ESTIMATES**

Denotes amount for VEDP board approval

^Marketing expenditures will be split between FY26 and FY27

\*See Appendix for staffing plan and organizational chart; FY26 personnel costs are pro-rated for partial year of staffing

## NEXT STEPS

- VEDP Board feedback will be incorporated into the final comprehensive plan
- Upon the VEDP Board's approval of the marketing plan maximum budget, work on the plan will commence
- VEDP will hire V-TOP staff this fall
- V-TOP marketing will launch January 2026



University of Virginia



# APPENDIX

# THE BUDGET LANGUAGE ASSIGNED SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO SCHEV

\$12M in FY25 | \$8.5M in FY26



## Stakeholder engagement

- That are successfully engaging employers or successfully operating internship programs
- Cooperate with VEDP and partners in carrying out VEDP's responsibilities for employer-focused activities

## Administer institutional grants

- To enhance engagement with employers related to internship placement
- To assist students in securing and successfully completing internships, including those that traditionally do not participate

## Sector strategies

- Explore strategies on successful institutional, regional, statewide or sector-based internship programs

## Support career readiness

- Develop internship readiness resources, delivery methods, and outreach activities for students and institutional career development practices, scale, and outcomes

## Data collection and reporting

- Gather and report consistent data across institutions regarding current institutional internship practices, scale, and outcomes

## Pursue shared services or other efficiency initiatives, including technological solutions

# VEDP AND SCHEV HAVE MADE GOOD PROGRESS ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (1/3)

## Updates and Discussion

- Program coordination and communication
- Stakeholder engagement
- Internship platform
- Matching grant program
- Institutional grants
- Regional collaboratives
- Metrics
- Marketing campaign

## Program Coordination and Communication

SCHEV and VEDP representatives have been meeting weekly since July 2025 and will continue to meet on a regular basis throughout the year. During these meetings, both SCHEV and VEDP review progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments. Upon approval of the comprehensive plan, SCHEV and VEDP will communicate the updated roles, responsibilities, and processes to all relevant stakeholders.

The V-TOP Marketing Plan may include recommendations for updates to the V-TOP website and suggested new forms of communication with companies, partners, and institutions.

# VEDP AND SCHEV HAVE MADE GOOD PROGRESS ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2/3)

## Stakeholder Engagement

The V-TOP stakeholder group represents industry, workforce, and education partners who share SCHEV and VEDP's goals of increasing student engagement in internships, facilitating seamless employer engagement, and strengthening Virginia's talent pipeline and economy.

The stakeholder group met on August 5 to hear progress updates and share feedback on the elements of the program. The stakeholder group will meet quarterly to serve as a strategic partner to SCHEV and VEDP leadership by providing diverse perspectives, informed feedback, and insights.

## Internship Platform

VEDP is working with the Strada Education Foundation to explore an appropriate technology platform to connect students interested in internship opportunities with Virginia companies.

Recognizing that many Virginia institutions, students, and employers already utilize various technology platforms, VEDP and Strada are evaluating solutions that can either serve as a comprehensive, standalone product or function as an effective aggregator and integrator of internship opportunities and data from existing platforms across the state.

Once the appropriate platform is selected, VEDP will work with Virginia Works to ensure the internship opportunities are connected to the Virginia Has Jobs platform.

## Matching Grant Platform

VEDP will use its existing Salesforce CRM to manage the grant program, which reimburses one-half of an intern's wages for qualifying businesses with 150 or fewer employees. VEDP currently tracks multiple grant programs and state incentives in its Salesforce platform and has a well-established process for accepting applications and disbursing funds.

# VEDP AND SCHEV HAVE MADE GOOD PROGRESS ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (3/3)

## Institutional Grants

SCHEV will continue to provide grants to Virginia's public and private institutions to support data collection and systems that support institutional and student readiness for internships and other work-based learning opportunities.

## Regional Collaboratives

SCHEV and VEDP will collaborate on a new model for regional activities.

VEDP intends to hire regional V-TOP staff who will partner with SCHEV and university contacts and be responsible for promoting the program to companies through various channels, including events, presentations, and partner collaboration. VEDP's V-TOP staff will help companies develop, implement, and expand high quality paid internship programs including assisting companies with posting internship opportunities on the new V-TOP platform. Staff will also guide businesses through the V-TOP grant program, including assistance applying for the matching grant, submitting requests for reimbursement, progress tracking, and post-grant surveys.

## Metrics

VOEE and Strada are assisting SCHEV and VEDP with establishing appropriate goals for the program and determining potential short-, medium-, and long-term metrics and data sources (activities and outcomes).

## FULL FY2025-FY2026 BIENNIAL BUDGET LANGUAGE (1/3)

- T.1. Out of this appropriation, **\$6,000,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to support employer-focused activities that further the goal of providing all postsecondary students in Virginia with one or more paid internships** during their undergraduate course of study.
2. Out of the amounts provided in this paragraph, up to **\$500,000 in fiscal year 2026 may be transferred by the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget to the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works) to support the development and deployment of the jobseeker/individual focused portal, Virginia Has Jobs, for higher education related internships**. Such transfer will be coordinated and assessed for approval by the Board of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). If an amount is approved for the stated purpose, Virginia Works shall use the one-time funds provided in this paragraph to increase the capabilities of the Virginia Has Jobs platform to collect information from employers on available higher education internships and connect students to these internship opportunities. To provide guidance on functionality, feature requirements, and user experience considerations of the higher education related internship component of the Virginia Has Jobs platform, Virginia Works shall convene an advisory group consisting of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), institutions of higher education, VEDP, Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Business Higher Education Council, and other statewide local government and non-profit education partners. The advisory group will confirm that the Virginia Has Jobs platform is not duplicative of existing platforms used by any of the advisory group members. Virginia Works shall not use these funds for the marketing or promotion of the Virginia Has Jobs platform.
3. Out of the amounts provided in this paragraph, **up to \$2,000,000 in fiscal year 2026 may be designated for VEDP to conduct initial outreach and marketing to increase employer participation in paid internship and other work-based learning programs** pursuant to § 23.1-903.4, Code of Virginia, including developing and implementing a statewide promotion, convening, and marketing program to encourage, assist, and recognize employers that increase employment of undergraduate student interns. Such amounts will be subject to approval by the Board of VEDP.

## FULL FY2025-FY2026 BIENNIAL BUDGET LANGUAGE (2/3)

4. Out of this amounts provided in this paragraph, **up to \$3,500,000 in fiscal year 2026 and up to \$6,000,000 each year thereafter, is provided for VEDP to support the following activities: (i) arranging for administration of the matching grant program for certain employers of higher education related student interns as provided in this paragraph; (ii) coordinating regional collaboratives to serve as intermediaries for employers seeking to initiate or expand employment of higher education related student interns in a region; and (iii) measuring and reporting program participation and progress toward identified goals through the Virginia Office of Education and Workforce Alignment.** VEDP shall convene a stakeholder group from business, industry, education, economic and workforce development, and government, including the following primary partners for employer engagement: Virginia Chamber of Commerce; Virginia Business Higher Education Council; and other statewide local government and non-profit education partners to design these activities. At the recommendation of the stakeholder group, **VEDP may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia Works to carry out the activities** listed in paragraphs T.4. and 5. of this item; however, VEDP shall remain the fiscal agent for these activities. The MOU shall provide for ongoing collaboration by and with SCHEV and institutions of higher education to integrate the employer-focused activities authorized in this paragraph with campus internship centers and other activities related to postsecondary paid and credit-bearing internships that are implemented pursuant to Item 132.I. **Such amounts to be authorized and the MOU will be subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP.**

5. VEDP shall provide for implementation of a program of **matching grants for small and midsize Virginia-based employers that hire undergraduate student interns** and shall establish criteria for the grants in consultation with the partners identified in paragraph T.4. of this item. Such criteria shall include: (i) a limitation of eligibility to for-profit business and nonprofit organizations, excluding institutions of higher education, with physical operations and facilities in Virginia and 150 or fewer Virginia-based employees; (ii) certification of employer eligibility by the authority following a training program of reasonable duration and agreement by the employer to reasonable mentoring and reporting obligations; (iii) a limitation of grant awards to reimbursement, not to exceed \$7,500 per higher education related internship, for a maximum of one-half of wages, including FICA, and workplace subsidies, including transportation, housing, and other internship-related expenses, paid to or for the benefit of a student participating in a qualifying internship; (iv) the minimum and maximum number of hours required to ensure the student gains valuable work experience; (v) a limitation of the qualifying number of higher education related internships per employer; and (vi) the maximum timeframe for employers to be eligible to receive the grants. Prioritization of grant awards may consider employers of 50 or fewer employees. The authority may provide other services to employers, including arranging for one or more staffing agencies to provide services related to higher education related intern recruitment and placement, but eligibility for matching grants shall not be conditioned on an employer's engagement with or use of such staffing agency or other services.

## FULL FY2025-FY2026 BIENNIAL BUDGET LANGUAGE (3/3)

6. **VEDP may employ a program administrator, contract for professional services related to marketing and communications, and take such other actions within its existing authority as it deems appropriate** to accomplish the purposes of this paragraph and facilitate the partnerships and collaboration described herein. All activities and amounts are subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP.

# SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION OF INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WILL REQUIRE DEDICATED VEDP STAFF TO BE HIRED THIS YEAR

## Code Requirements for VEDP Board Approval

- All activities and amounts are subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP

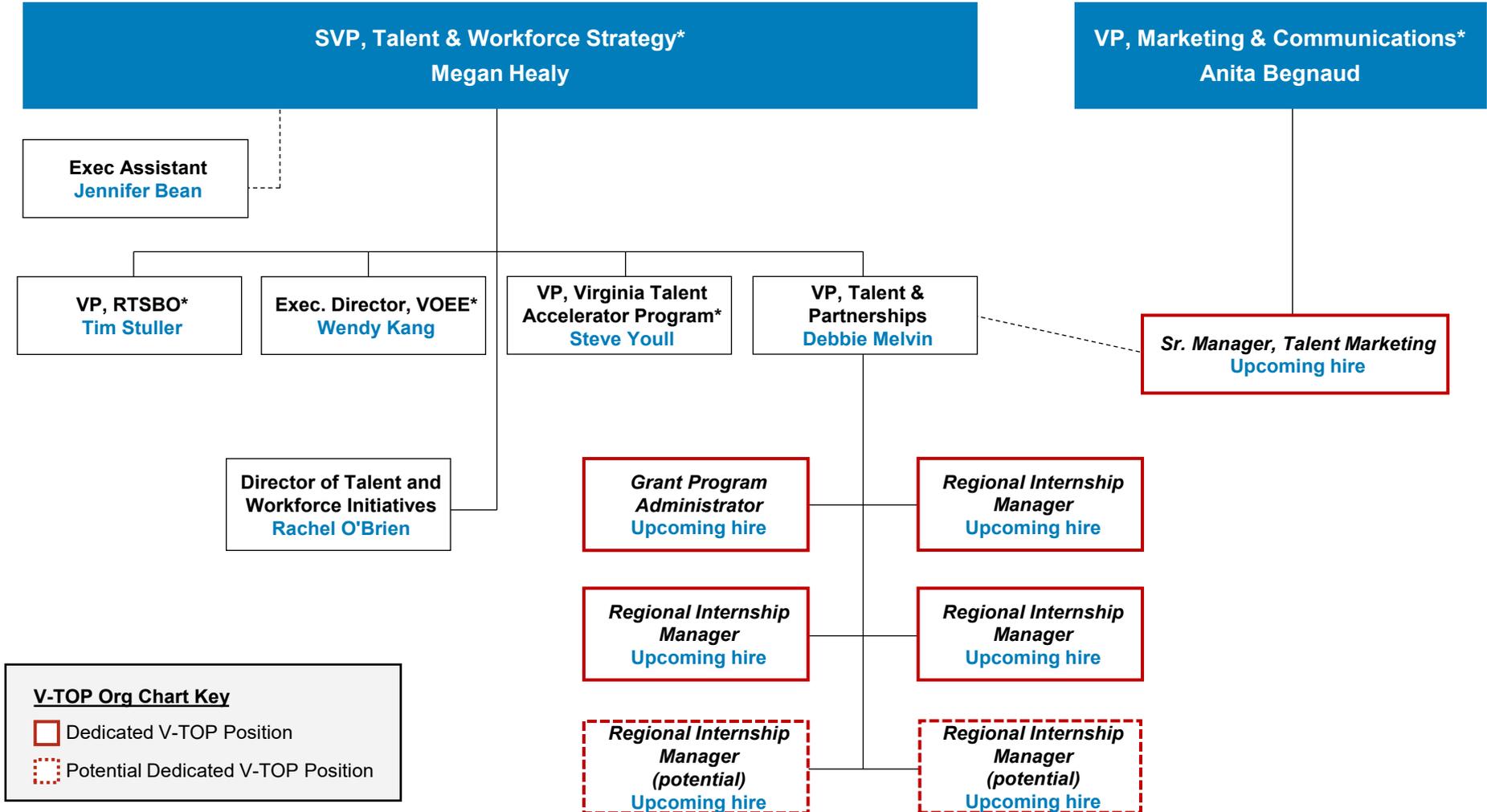
Staff	Purpose
VP, Talent and Partnerships	Oversees the V-TOP program, supports statewide business engagement, and develops high-impact public-private partnerships that align talent development efforts with employer needs
Sr. Manager, Talent Marketing	Part of M&C team. Dedicated to overseeing VTOP marketing plan execution and integrating internships into Top State for Talent messaging. Included in marketing budget.
Grant Program Administrator	Responsible for reviewing and approving grant program applications and requests for reimbursement, advising on grant program guidelines, and maintaining data in Salesforce and other technology platforms
Regional Internship Managers (3 to 5)	Provide on-the-ground support to businesses in designing internship programs, assist businesses with posting internship positions on platform, guide businesses through the grant application process and matching grant reimbursements, work with partners to promote program, and deliver workshops, webinars, and info sessions for businesses
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$700,000 - \$1.05M</b>

**TOTAL IS ESTIMATE**

# VEDP'S V-TOP EXECUTION REQUIRES DEDICATED STAFFING ACROSS GRANT MANAGEMENT REGIONAL COORDINATION, & MARKETING

4-6 V-TOP FTEs

1 V-TOP FTE



**V-TOP Org Chart Key**

- Dedicated V-TOP Position
- Potential Dedicated V-TOP Position

\*Full staffing not shown for every division to highlight key V-TOP positions

# Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership

Comprehensive Plan

Draft - September 18, 2025



# V-TOP Comprehensive Plan

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## Development of Comprehensive Plan

In accordance with budget directives from the General Assembly, specifically set forth in § 23.1-903.4 of the Code of Virginia and Items [113 \(T\)](#) and [132 \(I\)](#) of Chapter 725 of the 2025 Virginia Acts of Assembly (“the 2025 Acts”), the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (“SCHEV”), an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority (“VEDP”), a political subdivision of the Commonwealth entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (“the Memorandum”), effective June 30, 2025. The purpose of this Memorandum is to memorialize the partnership between SCHEV and VEDP in administering and implementing the Innovative Internship Program, otherwise known as the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership Program (V-TOP), requirements and to commit to actions regarding V-TOP on an ongoing basis.

The Memorandum committed SCHEV and VEDP to develop a comprehensive plan (“the Plan”) regarding the coordination, communication, and facilitation regarding the student-focused and employer-focused aspects of V-TOP.

To ensure success of the V-TOP program, the Plan outlines the intended execution of each entity’s responsibilities and planned collaboration to include:

- a clear communications strategy between SCHEV, VEDP, and other relevant parties in administering the Program, including frequency of coordination, primary points of contact, and information-sharing protocols
- the collaborative development of baselines, metrics, outcomes, and goals, including how data regarding the program will be collected, for both the student-focused and employer-focused aspects of the Program to ensure the commonality and compatibility of SCHEV and VEDP’s efforts
- the development of clear business practices, processes, procedures, and expectations in the administration of the Program
- the establishment of a working group as set forth in the 2025 Acts
- a strategy to coordinate regional collaborative activity among the Parties
- any other items deemed relevant by SCHEV and VEDP

The following Plan was developed in consultation with business, industry, education, and workforce development partners through the required Advisory Group and through strategic outreach to state and local partners. The original plan will be executed by October 1, 2025, but will be updated and improved upon with stakeholder feedback using a continuous improvement framework.

## VEDP Roles Per Legislation

According to the 2025 budget language (<https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2025/1/HB1600/Chapter/1/113/>), VEDP's roles and responsibilities for V-TOP include:

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Convene a stakeholder group from business, industry, education, economic and workforce development, and government to design appropriate support structures for business engagement

### **Matching Grant Program**

- Administer a matching grant program for Virginia employers that hire undergraduate student interns
  - Limited to for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations with physical operations in Virginia and 150 or fewer Virginia-based employees
  - Includes training requirement, reasonable mentoring, and reporting obligations
  - Limited to a maximum of one-half of wages, not to exceed \$7,500 per internship

### **Regional Collaboratives**

- Coordinate regional collaboratives to serve as intermediaries for employers seeking to initiate or expand employment of higher education related student interns in a region

### **Outreach and Marketing**

- Conduct initial outreach and marketing to increase employer participation in paid internship and other work-based learning programs
- Includes developing and implementing a statewide promotion, convening, and marketing program to encourage, assist, and recognize employers that increase employment of undergraduate student interns

### **Data Collection and Reporting**

- Measure and report program participation and progress toward identified goals in this plan through the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE)

See appendix for full budget language.

# SCHEV Roles Per Legislation

According to the budget language (<https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2025/1/HB1600/Chapter/1/132/>), SCHEV's roles and responsibilities for V-TOP include:

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Engage stakeholders from business and industry, secondary and higher education, economic development, and state agencies and entities that are successfully engaging employers or successfully operating internship programs
- Cooperate with VEDP and identified partners to support VEDP's responsibilities for employer-focused activities that expand availability of and access to paid and credit-bearing internships and corresponding pathways leading to full-time Virginia-based employment.

## Institutional Grants

- Award grants to support initiatives that establish or enhance an on-campus internship center or similar one-stop service to assist students and employers with intern placement and that are expected to produce a demonstrated increase in student participation in paid internship programs and work-based learning opportunities
- Ensure eligibility requires commitment from senior academic and administrative leadership, with a coordinated institutional plan to expand internship participation by students, to incorporate internships in curricula, to report completion of internships and courses that include internships on student transcripts, and to remove administrative and financial barriers to internship opportunities
- Support students in securing and successfully completing internships, including students that traditionally do not participate in such programs
- Ensure institutions' plans include criteria in the budget language and consider criteria in the budget language when determining grant award amounts
- Provide planning grants where institutions have not yet developed a coordinated plan
- Provide recurring funding for institutions that demonstrate annual progress.

## Sector and Regional Strategies

- Explore strategies in Virginia and elsewhere on successful institutional, regional, statewide or sector-based internship programs

## Support Career Readiness

- Develop internship readiness educational resources, delivery methods, and outreach and awareness activities for students and institutional career development personnel

## Data Collection and Reporting

- Gather and report consistent data across institutions regarding current institutional practices, scale, and outcomes
- Support institutions in establishing goals and tracking progress measures aligned with the metrics established by SCHEV and VEDP
- Develop a plan to ensure that existing programs and any new programs developed include internships or a work-based learning opportunity where appropriate

## Efficiency and Shared Services

- Pursue shared services or other efficiency initiatives, including technological solutions

See appendix for full budget language.

## Stakeholder Engagement

The 2025 Acts direct VEDP to convene a stakeholder group from business, industry, education, economic and workforce development, and government, including the following primary partners for employer engagement: Virginia Chamber of Commerce; Virginia Business Higher Education Council; and other statewide local government and non-profit education partners to design these activities.

The 2025 Acts also direct SCHEV to convene stakeholders from business and industry, secondary and higher education, economic development, and state agencies and entities that are successfully engaging employers or successfully operating internship programs.

VEDP and SCHEV agreed to convene one stakeholder group that meets the goals of both organizations. The stakeholder group will meet quarterly to serve as a strategic partner to SCHEV and VEDP leadership by providing diverse perspectives, informed feedback, and insights. Its primary role is to:

- Advise and inform by offering input on the program and identifying emerging needs, concerns, and opportunities
- Bridge communication by acting as a liaison between program and its broader stakeholder base
- Enhance decision-making by providing context and lived experience that enrich program decision-making
- Support strategic alignment by ensuring program strategies, actions, and priorities align with stakeholder values and expectations
- Promote engagement by serving as ambassadors for the program's mission and goals

National partners, like Strada Education Foundation, will continue to assist in the development and implementation of this plan, bringing national best practices and expertise.

## Regional Collaboratives and Intermediaries

### VEDP's Regional Employer Engagement Strategy

The budget language directs VEDP to coordinate regional collaboratives to serve as intermediaries for employers seeking to initiate or expand employment of higher education related student interns in a region. Addressing the uniqueness of each region in the Commonwealth along with different readiness levels of the higher education institutions, regional partnership and engagement is the foundation for V-TOP success.

VEDP is connected to traded sector businesses across the Commonwealth through its Regional Talent Solutions and Business Outreach (RTSBO) staff, a statewide team who partners with local and regional economic developers to support companies by connecting them to community and state resources. VEDP's Manufacturing, Knowledge Work, and Logistics sector directors also meet with key existing businesses in their target sectors to better understand how Virginia can create a more supportive ecosystem for the sector, including talent development. Through these business engagement efforts, VEDP has a direct connection to promote the value of internships to Virginia companies.

Additionally, VEDP partners closely with industry associations, regional chambers, as well as economic development, workforce, and higher education partners – all of which can help promote V-TOP to a wider business audience. Key partners in employer engagement across industry sectors will include the Virginia Business Higher Education Council, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Works, the regional workforce development boards, and their regional Business Services Teams.

VEDP will refresh the *Virginia Employer Readiness Toolkit* to be used as a resource to help companies develop and execute internships. The Toolkit can be shared widely by all partners and will drive Virginia companies to the V-TOP platform, the matching grant program, and to VEDP's regional collaboratives for technical assistance.

VEDP will promote other types of work-based learning opportunities to Virginia companies and will refer interested companies to the appropriate entity managing each type of opportunity:

- High School WBL Opportunities – VDOE Work-Based Learning Specialists
- Youth Work Experience – Virginia Works and the regional Workforce Development Boards
- On-the-job Training – Virginia Works
- Course Projects – SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners
- Micro-internships - SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners

- Apprenticeships – Virginia Works

VEDP will hire V-TOP Regional Internship Managers who will help companies develop and implement high quality paid internship programs, post internship opportunities on the V-TOP platform, and apply for the matching grant program. Each manager will act as a liaison between companies, educational institutions, and VEDP. Their responsibilities include:

#### **Business outreach and engagement**

- Develop and execute strategy to identify, engage, and educate regional businesses on the value of internships and V-TOP through info sessions and one-on-one meetings
- Coordinate with VEDP staff and external partners to connect with companies interested in developing or growing internship programs
- Focus on outcomes including companies successfully hiring interns and growing their internship programs

#### **Internship program development and grant support**

- Advise businesses on designing and implementing high quality internships that meet the company's needs. This may include helping the company write job descriptions and post internship opportunities on the selected technology platform.
- Provide tools and training for businesses on how to best implement high quality internship programs
- Conduct training required for companies to access the matching grant program
- Guide businesses through the V-TOP grant program, including assistance applying for the matching grant, submitting requests for reimbursement, progress tracking, and post-grant surveys

#### **Partner engagement and promotion**

- Build strong partnerships with higher education, workforce, and industry organizations in the region
- Collaborate with VEDP and other partners to develop and share material to promote V-TOP
- Actively promote the program to partners, companies, and students through various channels, including events, presentations, and partner collaboration

#### **Data tracking, reporting, and evaluation**

- Track outreach, engagement, and placements in data systems for easy reporting on key metrics and regional impact
- Ensure all company engagements and matching grant applications and reimbursements are entered in Salesforce to be tracked along with the program outcomes
- Stay informed about best practices and emerging trends in internships and contribute to program improvement and expansion

As use of the V-TOP program grows, VEDP also intends to hire staff to serve as a state-level concierge service for large corporations that wish to hire interns in multiple regions.

## SCHEV's Regional Institution Engagement Strategy

SCHEV will fund a regional strategy for expanding work-based learning opportunities through a new grant opportunity called the V-TOP Institution-Led Regional Partners. Eligible institutions for the grant include public two-year and four-year institutions, as well as private four-year institutions that participate in the V-TAG program. These grants are designed to strengthen collaboration within regions, ensuring institutions, employers, and students benefit from coordinated strategies that advance internship readiness and work-based learning opportunities.

Institution-Led Regional Partners are required to collaborate closely with institutions to promote and integrate resources within the region that align with V-TOP's enhanced work-based learning initiatives. These efforts include project-based activities, micro-internships, internship-like work-study activities, and career readiness resources. As part of V-TOP's statutory purpose, grantees will support V-TOP in promoting career readiness modules to students, faculty, and staff, as well as other resources such as professional development scholarships and mentorship training. Institution-Led Regional Partners will direct employers to VEDP staff for assistance with internship experiences and the matching grant program.

SCHEV's Institution-Led Regional Partners will provide recommendations or coordination support for the development of a shared regional strategy that aligns with SCHEV's post-secondary career readiness education goals and VEDP's employer engagement goals.

- **Regional convenings** - Grantees will facilitate the planning and documentation of multi-stakeholder meetings to share best practices and promote collaboration with institutions and key stakeholders within the region.
- **Shared reporting metrics** - Grantees will advise on standard metrics and reporting templates to be used by both SCHEV and VEDP to track engagement and outcomes.
- **Internship and work-based learning showcases** - Grantees will help curate content and plan logistics for events or campaigns that showcase successful internships and work-based learning experiences.

SCHEV will use Jobs for the Future (JFF) as the framework to align education and workforce priorities across the nine regions. By organizing activities into four categories - Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Preparation, and Career Experience - SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners and VEDP staff can ensure a coordinated and intentional approach. This approach will focus on building student readiness, connecting students to employers, and fostering high-quality work-based learning opportunities. SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will take the lead in Career Awareness, Career Exploration, and Career Preparation, while VEDP will facilitate internship support and connect companies with partners for other Career Experience activities.

**Career Awareness** provides a foundation for work-based learning and prepares students to reflect on their interests and strengths. The connection between classroom learning and real-world work activities helps students to make informed decisions about their career choices. Examples include career days, career expos, career research, career advising,

interest inventories, and industry speakers. SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will develop a strategy to spearhead initiatives that help to increase student awareness of various career pathways available in the region. By collaborating with other institutions, these university partners will help organize career days, inform employers about regional expos for their participation, and arrange for industry speakers or summits at the institutional and regional levels. These activities will assist students in identifying their interests, evaluating their strengths, and making informed decisions about their careers, thereby laying a strong foundation for future work-based learning opportunities.

**Career Exploration** offers structured learning opportunities for short periods, supporting students in gaining introductory knowledge and interaction with an industry and its associated occupations. Examples include job shadowing, company tours, mentoring, simulations, and externships. SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will provide a strategy on how to promote and implement existing resources, which include student, employer, and institutional modules; mentorship training, professional development scholarships, and work-based learning activities. The purpose is to enhance awareness of and encourage the use of tools that support internship readiness, foster employer engagement with institutions, and increase awareness of regional and statewide industries. Additionally, efforts must ensure equitable access to work-based learning experiences for all students and institutions within the region.

SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will also facilitate regional institutional and student engagement by actively engaging both institutions and students in the region through regular communication, outreach, and programming. This includes coordinating engagement with career services and academic units, facilitating student access to work-based learning opportunities, and supporting institutions that may lack established infrastructure or capacity to expose students to early-stage career readiness. SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will coordinate regional activities in partnership with institutions (e.g., workshops, regional industry tours, readiness events, and job shadowing) to create exposure and connections between students and Virginia employers.

**Career Preparation** provides extended opportunities for participants to increase their knowledge of an identified field of interest and gain employability skills and some entry-level technical knowledge or skills. Examples include service learning, apprenticeship readiness, pre-apprenticeships, cooperative education, micro-internships, and project-based learning. SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will collaborate with SCHEV's central office to support institutions in implementing project-based learning, micro-internships, and short-term activities that provide real-world experiences while building career readiness skills for students.

**Career Experience** engages individuals as paid workers to gain specific skills in a particular industry or occupation. Examples include paid internships, registered apprenticeships, transitional jobs, and on-the-job training programs. SCHEV's Institution-led Regional Partners will direct appropriate employers to VEDP for assistance in this area.

## Institutional Grants

Through V-TOP, SCHEV has offered and will continue to offer grant programs to public and private non-profit institutions of higher education to support, facilitate, and grow/expand internships and other work-based learning (WBL) for Virginia students. The current grant programs are administered under an umbrella framework of Impact Grants. Within this framework, institutions may apply for grants in sequential tracks: Vision Grants, Capacity-Building Grants, and Scaling Grants.

- **Vision Grant** [One year-\$25,00 award] – This grant is designed for private, non-profit, TAG-participating institutions to create a campus-wide plan for implementing internships and WBL. Funds are provided to support strategic planning, to establish institutional priorities, and to further development of strategies to enhance WBL initiatives.
- **Capacity-Building Grant** [One year-\$150,00 award] – This grant targets the 15 public four-year institutions, Richard Bland College, and those private institutions that have already received a Vision Grant. Funds are intended to strengthen the institution’s capacity to design, implement, and sustain high-quality WBL programs. Each grant supports the development of infrastructure, staff training, and partnerships with employers.
- **Scaling Grant** [Two-year-\$250,00 award] – This grant is available to the public four-year institutions that seek to expand their existing WBL programs to serve more students, employers, and regions. Funds are to be focused on increasing program capacity, establishing partnerships in high-demand fields (such as healthcare and IT), and enhancing infrastructure.

In FY2025, SCHEV issued Impact Grants to 20 institutions, including the VCCS, which is administering its grant award across its 23 colleges in alignment with the Vision Grant and Capacity-Building Grant tracks, as appropriate per college.

The three Impact Grant tracks provide institutions with a pathway to enhance work-based learning, depending on each’s current stage in the process: developing a vision, building capacity, or scaling existing programs. An institution may apply in the track for which it is/has become eligible, and which aligns with its needs. Impact Grants are recurring, provided that funding remains available; an institution may continue to apply if it demonstrates significant outcomes.

SCHEV plans to issue another Request for Proposals (RFP) for another round of Impact Grants in late Fall 2025.

In the near future, SCHEV intends to create via V-TOP and offer to institutions of higher education additional grant opportunities that will enhance WBL activities beyond traditional internships. To facilitate the development of these new grant programs, SCHEV visits the institutions; meets with relevant stakeholders and partners across the state; and holds discussions with national leaders in the WBL sector.

## Matching Grant Program

VEDP will manage the V-TOP matching grant program, which provides funding to qualifying small and midsize Virginia-based employers that hire undergraduate interns. VEDP currently tracks multiple grant programs and state incentives in its Salesforce platform and has a well-established process for accepting applications and disbursing funds directly to businesses.

VEDP has created a V-TOP matching grant program application and reimbursement request form with accompanying instructions.

Matching funds are available to Virginia companies that provide paid internships for students enrolled in public and private Virginia colleges and universities.

- To be eligible for wage reimbursement under the V-TOP Program, companies must:
  - Complete the required training
  - Be a for-profit or a non-profit business with physical operations in Virginia
  - Be registered and in good standing with the State Corporation Commission
  - Have 150 or fewer Virginia-based employees
  - Provide an internship opportunity with valuable work experience, career knowledge, and mentorship
  - Pay the intern at least Virginia minimum wage
  - Provide an internship for a minimum of 200 hours and eight weeks
- The V-TOP matching grant program can reimburse a company one-half of the intern's wages, up to \$7,500 per intern per state fiscal year (July 1-June 30) with a maximum of \$75,000 for ten interns per state fiscal year (July 1-June 30).
- No more than 50% of the company's workforce may be interns.
- Companies are responsible for sourcing, selecting, onboarding, and hiring interns, either directly or through a staffing service of the company's choice, as well as managing the interns. VEDP Internship Managers are available to support employers with this process and share available V-TOP resources.
- Companies must submit a V-TOP matching grant program application at least two weeks in advance of the internship.
- One company application may be submitted for multiple internships planned for up to a 12-month period, but reimbursement requests must be submitted separately for each intern upon completion of each internship.
- The deadline to submit a reimbursement request is 60 days after the end date of the internship period. Companies must have already paid the intern wages before requesting reimbursement. Reimbursement is limited to actual wages paid to the intern by the company. Payroll taxes are not eligible for reimbursement. Proof of payment for intern wages reflecting gross pay is required for reimbursement.

- The reimbursement request form will include a post-internship survey for the purpose of program improvements.

Reimbursement requests will be reviewed by VEDP within one week of receipt. After a reimbursement is approved, VEDP will mail a check within 30 days to the company at the Remittance Address on the W9 submitted by the company.

The current statewide staffing agency contracted by SCHEV to administer the matching grant program will be formally phased out as the matching grant administration transitions to VEDP. The transition will be executed to ensure minimal disruption to ongoing services and programs. SCHEV has assumed financial responsibility for the active contract with the staffing agency until the end of the contract performance period, November 30, 2025.

## Platform to Match Students with Companies

VEDP is working with the Strada Education Foundation to explore an appropriate technology platform to connect students interested in internship opportunities with Virginia companies. Recognizing that many Virginia institutions, students, and employers already utilize various technology platforms, VEDP and Strada are evaluating solutions that can either serve as a comprehensive, standalone product or function as an effective aggregator and integrator of internship opportunities and data from existing platforms across the state.

Factors being considered include:

- **Ease of Employer, Student, and Institution Engagement.** How does the product simplify internship posting for all Virginia employers, support institutions in their efforts to help students secure internships, and ensure seamless access to internships for all Virginia students?
- **Internship Impact & Tracking.** How would the product enable VEDP to comprehensively track internship postings, completion, student outcomes, and overall program success?
- **Technical Integration & Customization.** What are the platform's capabilities for integrating with other existing state systems?
- **Vendor Partnership & Support.** What is the platform's experience partnering with state-level workforce development initiatives, and what is the ongoing technical and training support provided for users?

Representatives from SCHEV and Virginia Works are participating in the platform demonstrations. A platform will be selected and available for use in Fall 2025.

Once the appropriate platform is selected, VEDP will work with Virginia Works to ensure the internship opportunities are connected to the Virginia Has Jobs platform.

## Marketing and Branding

VEDP is seeking a qualified marketing firm to develop and execute a statewide marketing plan for V-TOP. The goal of the marketing plan is to significantly expand paid internship opportunities for higher education students across the Commonwealth. The campaign's core objective is to raise employer awareness of V-TOP, increase the number of paid internships offered, and boost participation in the V-TOP matching grant program. The selected firm will work closely with VEDP and other stakeholders to craft a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes audience segmentation, compelling messaging, and a multi-channel media approach.

The selected marketing firm will:

- Develop a strategic marketing plan, messaging, and media strategy for V-TOP aligned with VEDP's statewide talent objectives.
- Leverage national and state research provided by VEDP on company motivations and barriers to creating internships, using it to craft targeted messaging for different employer segments.
- Build out Virginia's internship brand, including campaign concept development, asset acquisition (photo/video), and collateral and ad production across digital, social, print, and broadcast channels as appropriate.
- Develop an employer recognition program and operational infrastructure to celebrate and incentivize employer participation in V-TOP.
- Develop a pitch to secure endorsements and active participation by Virginia's top employers, industry associations, chambers, and regional economic development allies to amplify campaign reach and credibility.

The campaign will target employers of all sizes and regions. To track the effectiveness of the campaign, performance metrics and regular reporting will be essential. The initial strategy is expected within 8–10 weeks of the contract award, with a full campaign launch planned for January 2026 and a 12-month execution period.

## Communication Strategy

SCHEV and VEDP will communicate the updated roles, responsibilities, and processes to all relevant stakeholders. This coordinated communication approach ensures stakeholders are fully informed about the administrative changes, facilitates a smooth transition, encourages ongoing engagement, and ensures the success of the program.

SCHEV and VEDP representatives have been meeting weekly since July 2025 and will continue to meet on a regular basis throughout the year. During these meetings, both SCHEV and VEDP review progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments. SCHEV and VEDP agree to share information with transparency and accuracy in order to ensure program success.

SCHEV will continue to contract with the Virginia Chamber of Commerce to host the virginiatop.org website. Upon completion of the marketing plan in January 2026, VEDP and SCHEV will determine if the V-TOP website should remain under the purview of SCHEV or should be transitioned to VEDP.

SCHEV and VEDP will collaborate on newsletter distribution and social media channels. Upon completion of the development of the marketing plan in January 2026, VEDP and SCHEV will determine if these communication mechanisms should remain under the purview of SCHEV or should be transitioned to VEDP.

The following individuals serve as points of contact for each organization:

SCHEV	VEDP
<p>Scott Fleming Executive Director State Council of Higher Education for Virginia <a href="mailto:scottfleming@schev.edu">scottfleming@schev.edu</a></p>	<p>Megan Healy Senior Vice President, Talent and Workforce Strategy Virginia Economic Development Partnership <a href="mailto:mhealy@vedp.org">mhealy@vedp.org</a></p>
<p>Alisha Bazemore Assistant Director for Innovative Work-Based Learning Initiatives State Council of Higher Education for Virginia <a href="mailto:alishabazemore@schev.edu">alishabazemore@schev.edu</a></p>	<p>Debbie Melvin Vice President, Talent and Partnerships Virginia Economic Development Partnership <a href="mailto:dmelvin@vedp.org">dmelvin@vedp.org</a></p>

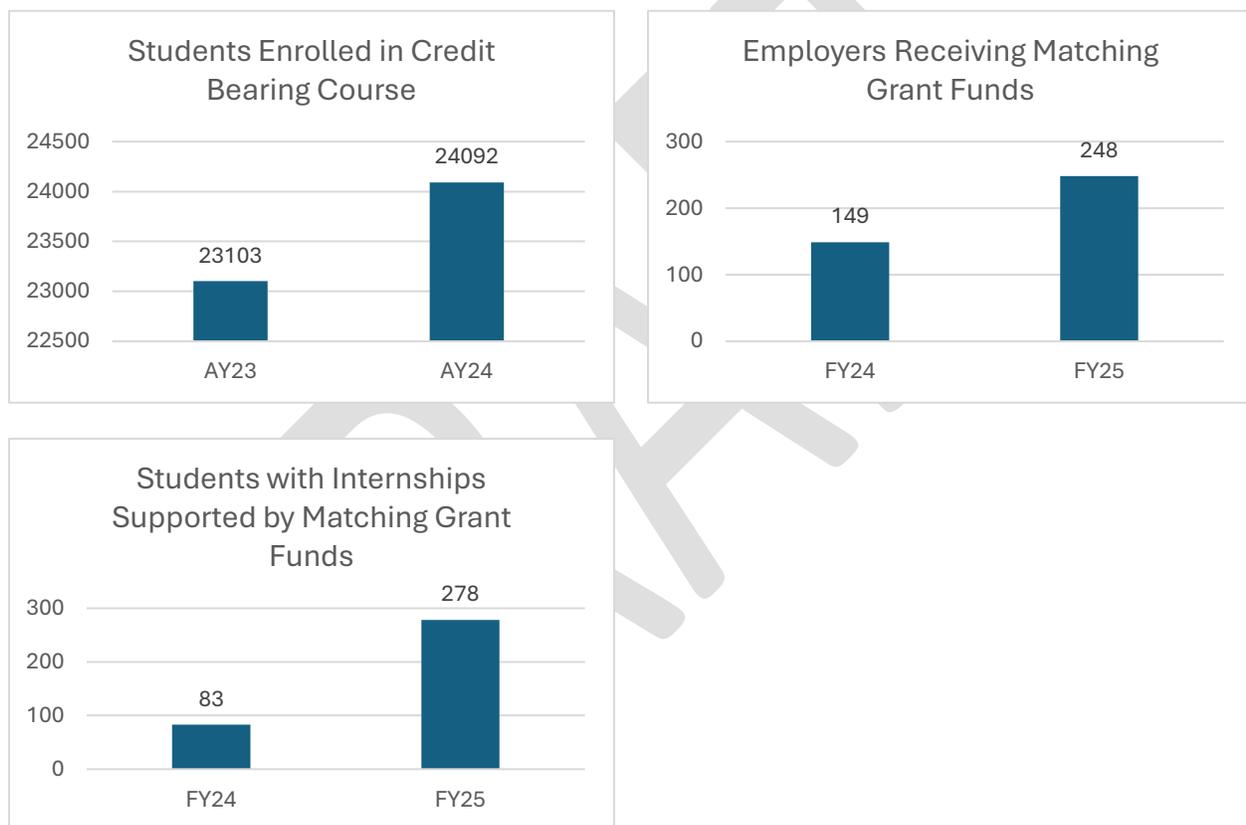
## Goals and Metrics

SCHEV and VEDP are working collaboratively with the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) to establish goals and metrics for internships and work-based learning opportunities for employers, students, and institutions that support an increased participation while ensuring the quality of the program.

Institutions shall set goals and progress measures aligned with the metrics established by SCHEV and VEDP related to increasing the number of students participating in internships and work-based learning opportunities. These metrics will guide the plan to ensure that existing programs and new programs developed include internships or a work-based learning opportunity where appropriate. Institutions shall report to the Council annually regarding progress on these goals.

SCHEV and VEDP will work together to monitor progress, report outcomes, and promote continuous improvement through data-driven evaluations and active engagement with stakeholders. To ensure efficiency and alignment of efforts, both entities will work closely together to avoid any overlap or duplication of activities.

Baseline V-TOP data from FY24 and FY25 indicates:



Preliminary discussions with the stakeholder group, Strada, and VOEE point to a staged approach for V-TOP metrics:

- Short-term goals and metrics that can be tracked and measured with current systems and systems to be implemented this fiscal year
- Mid-term goals and metrics that will be tracked and measured with enhancements to current systems.
- Long-term goals and metrics that will be tracked and measured once more complex systems are put in place

Short-term goals for the program are: *[to be updated with metrics recommended by VOEE and approved by SCHEV and VEDP in late September]*

Students	Institutions	Employers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # and % of students reporting participation in paid internships annually</li> <li>▪ # and % of students reporting participation in credit-bearing internships annually</li> <li>▪ # and % of students reporting participation in other work-based learning activities annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparison to benchmarks used in national rankings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # of employers posting internship opportunities on V-TOP platform</li> <li>▪ # of employers receiving support from VEDP in creating or growing internship programs</li> <li>▪ # of employers receiving funding from the matching grant program</li> <li>▪ # of students with internships supported by matching grant funds</li> </ul>

VOEE will provide guidance to SCHEV and VEDP on the appropriate metrics and data sources for reporting. V-TOP will also participate in the Workforce Metrics Data Collection coordinated by Virginia Works.

## Annual Reporting

SCHEV and VEDP, in collaboration with VOEE, shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations and Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations by November 1 of each year, beginning in 2026. This report will detail the progress made in meeting the established goals and metrics, including institutional progress, and expenses incurred for the outlined activities.

# Appendix

## Innovative Internship Program Legislation

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter9/section23.1-903.4/>

§ 23.1-903.4. Innovative Internship Fund and Program.

A. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Innovative Internship Fund (the Fund). The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of the Innovative Internship Program established pursuant to subsection B. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Executive Director of the Council.

B. There is hereby established the Innovative Internship Program (the Program). The purpose of the Program is to expand paid or credit-bearing student internship and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Virginia employers. The Program comprises institutional grants and a statewide initiative to facilitate the readiness of students, employers, and institutions of higher education to participate in internship and other work-based learning opportunities.

1. In administering the statewide initiative, the Council shall (i) engage stakeholders from business and industry, secondary and higher education, economic development, and state agencies and entities that are successfully engaging employers or successfully operating internship programs; (ii) explore strategies in Virginia and elsewhere on successful institutional, regional, statewide or sector-based internship programs; (iii) gather data on current institutional internship practices, scale, and outcomes; (iv) develop internship readiness educational resources, delivery methods, certification procedures, and outreach and awareness activities for employer partners, students, and institutional career development personnel; (v) pursue shared services or other efficiency initiatives, including technological solutions; and (vi) create a process to track key measures of performance.

2. The Council shall establish eligibility criteria, including requirements for matching funds, for institutional grants. Such grants shall be used to accomplish one or more of the following goals: (i) support state or regional workforce needs; (ii) support initiatives to attract and retain talent in the Commonwealth; (iii) support research and research commercialization in sectors and clusters targeted for development; (iv) support regional economic growth and diversification plans; (v) enhance the job readiness of students; (vi) enhance higher education affordability and timely completion for Virginia students; or (vii) further the objectives of increasing the tech talent pipeline.

3. The Council shall partner with the Office of Education and Labor Market Alignment to collect and utilize data that includes the gaps that are most significant in hindering the Commonwealth from achieving the goals listed in subdivision 2. The Council and the Office of Education and Labor Market Alignment shall identify, at minimum: (i) state or regional workforce needs for which the lack of work-based learning opportunities is negatively impacting the success of regional economic growth and diversification plans and (ii) degree programs, the graduates of which describe themselves as underemployed, that would benefit from incorporating work-based learning into the curriculum. The Council and the Office of Education and Labor Market Alignment shall use the needs and degree programs identified in this subdivision to collaboratively determine priorities for: (a) using the portion of student financial aid authorized by the budget to be awarded as grants to students participating in work-based learning; (b) redesigning of curricula at public institutions of higher education; (c) garnering regional support and services to ensure the readiness of students and employers; (d) awarding grants to institutions of higher education to ensure their readiness to support students through detailed planning and implementation of best practices for scaling work-based learning; (e) providing or raising funds to provide matching funds so that students with limited resources, who have traditionally participated in the Program at lower rates, may intern at small Virginia-based employers; and (f) enhancing data collection and analysis.

### VEDP-Specific Legislation

<https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2025/1/HB1600/Chapter/1/113/>

T.1. Out of this appropriation, \$6,000,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to support employer-focused activities that further the goal of providing all postsecondary students in Virginia with one or more paid internships during their undergraduate course of study.

2. Out of the amounts provided in this paragraph, up to \$500,000 in fiscal year 2026 may be transferred by the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget to the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works) to support the development and deployment of the jobseeker/individual focused portal, Virginia Has Jobs, for higher education related internships. Such transfer will be coordinated and assessed for approval by the Board of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). If an amount is approved for the stated purposed, Virginia Works shall use the one-time funds provided in this paragraph to increase the capabilities of the Virginia Has Jobs platform to collect information from employers on available higher education internships and connect students to these internship opportunities. To provide guidance on functionality, feature requirements, and user experience considerations of the higher education related internship component of the Virginia Has Jobs platform, Virginia Works shall convene an advisory group consisting of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), institutions of higher education, VEDP, Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Business Higher Education Council, and other statewide local government and non-profit education partners. The advisory group will confirm that the Virginia Has Jobs platform is not

duplicative of existing platforms used by any of the advisory group members. Virginia Works shall not use these funds for the marketing or promotion of the Virginia Has Jobs platform.

3. Out of the amounts provided in this paragraph, up to \$2,000,000 in fiscal year 2026 may be designated for VEDP to conduct initial outreach and marketing to increase employer participation in paid internship and other work-based learning programs pursuant to § 23.1-903.4, Code of Virginia, including developing and implementing a statewide promotion, convening, and marketing program to encourage, assist, and recognize employers that increase employment of undergraduate student interns. Such amounts will be subject to approval by the Board of VEDP.

4. Out of this amounts provided in this paragraph, up to \$3,500,000 in fiscal year 2026 and up to \$6,000,000 each year thereafter, is provided for VEDP to support the following activities: (i) arranging for administration of the matching grant program for certain employers of higher education related student interns as provided in this paragraph; (ii) coordinating regional collaboratives to serve as intermediaries for employers seeking to initiate or expand employment of higher education related student interns in a region; and (iii) measuring and reporting program participation and progress toward identified goals through the Virginia Office of Education and Workforce Alignment. VEDP shall convene a stakeholder group from business, industry, education, economic and workforce development, and government, including the following primary partners for employer engagement: Virginia Chamber of Commerce; Virginia Business Higher Education Council; and other statewide local government and non-profit education partners to design these activities. At the recommendation of the stakeholder group, VEDP may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia Works to carry out the activities listed in paragraphs T.4. and 5. of this item; however, VEDP shall remain the fiscal agent for these activities. The MOU shall provide for ongoing collaboration by and with SCHEV and institutions of higher education to integrate the employer-focused activities authorized in this paragraph with campus internship centers and other activities related to postsecondary paid and credit-bearing internships that are implemented pursuant to Item 132.I. Such amounts to be authorized and the MOU will be subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP.

5. VEDP shall provide for implementation of a program of matching grants for small and midsize Virginia-based employers that hire undergraduate student interns and shall establish criteria for the grants in consultation with the partners identified in paragraph T.4. of this item. Such criteria shall include: (i) a limitation of eligibility to for-profit business and nonprofit organizations, excluding institutions of higher education, with physical operations and facilities in Virginia and 150 or fewer Virginia-based employees; (ii) certification of employer eligibility by the authority following a training program of reasonable duration and agreement by the employer to reasonable mentoring and reporting obligations; (iii) a limitation of grant awards to reimbursement, not to exceed \$7,500 per higher education related internship, for a maximum of one-half of wages, including FICA, and workplace subsidies, including transportation, housing, and other internship-related expenses, paid to or for the benefit of a student participating in a qualifying internship; (iv) the minimum and maximum number of hours required to ensure

the student gains valuable work experience; (v) a limitation of the qualifying number of higher education related internships per employer; and (vi) the maximum timeframe for employers to be eligible to receive the grants. Prioritization of grant awards may consider employers of 50 or fewer employees. The authority may provide other services to employers, including arranging for one or more staffing agencies to provide services related to higher education related intern recruitment and placement, but eligibility for matching grants shall not be conditioned on an employer's engagement with or use of such staffing agency or other services.

6. VEDP may employ a program administrator, contract for professional services related to marketing and communications, and take such other actions within its existing authority as it deems appropriate to accomplish the purposes of this paragraph and facilitate the partnerships and collaboration described herein. All activities and amounts are subject to annual approval by the Board of VEDP.

## SCHEV-Specific Legislation

<https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2025/1/HB1600/Chapter/1/132/>

1.1. As a condition of this appropriation, \$12,000,000 the first year and \$8,500,000 the second year from the general fund is designated for the Innovative Internship Fund and Program, § 23.1-903.4, Code of Virginia. The funding is designed to expand paid or credit-bearing student internship and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Virginia employers. In furtherance of the goal of providing all postsecondary students in Virginia with one or more paid internships during their undergraduate course of study, funding shall be used for: (a) institutional grants to enhance engagement with employers related to internship placement and to assist students in securing and successfully completing internships, including students that traditionally do not participate in such programs; (b) administrative and other expenditures to accomplish the purposes of the Innovative Internship Fund and Program and this paragraph. The Council shall establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to transition the employer-focused outreach and engagement components of the Program to those entities in accordance with Item 113.T. The Council and VEDP shall consult with the partners identified in Item 113.T in the development of the MOU to facilitate their continuing collaboration. The MOU shall be completed and reported to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees no later than June 30, 2025.

2. Institutional grants shall be awarded to support initiatives that establish or enhance an on-campus internship center or similar one-stop service to assist students and employers with intern placement and that are expected to produce a demonstrated increase in student participation in paid internship programs and work-based learning opportunities. Institutions shall be eligible for grants upon demonstrating that it is a key priority of the institution and its senior academic and administrative leadership to have a coordinated plan to expand internship participation by students, to incorporate internships in curricula,

to report completion of internships and courses that include internships on student transcripts, and to remove administrative and financial barriers to internship opportunities. The plan shall include: (i) an implementation timeline, (ii) the allocation of resources and funding strategies to support internships, (iii) the assignment of dedicated personnel to facilitate placement of students in internships and engage with employers, (iv) the identification of how the institution will support students that are less likely to participate in internships and work-based learning opportunities, to be employed in an occupation related to their major upon completion of their certificate or degree, or to earn at or above the average earnings of graduates in their program major; (v) opportunities to align existing student employment opportunities on campus to include best practices of an internship program; and (vi) metrics for measuring, reporting, and regularly reviewing progress on the plan. Institutions that have not developed a plan may be eligible for planning grants as long as the planning grants are led by senior academic and administrative leadership. In determining the amount of grant awards, the Council shall consider the number of undergraduate students enrolled at the institution, the number of students at the institution who participate in internships, and the numerical and percentage increase in internship participation expected to result from the initiative. In addition, the Council shall increase grant awards based upon the following factors: (i) an institution's emphasis on internships that are part of pathways to full-time employment with Virginia-based employers; (ii) the institutional initiative's alignment with specific state or regional programs or partnerships related to economic growth and diversification or workforce development in Virginia; (iii) an institution's strength of commitment as reflected in its reallocation of institutional funds or solicitation of philanthropic support or business partnerships to support the initiative. This funding is intended to be recurring for institutions that demonstrate substantial yearly progress in achieving the objectives of the initiative as measured by the number of internships successfully completed by students.

3. In administering the program authorized in this paragraph, the Council shall (i) engage stakeholders from business and industry, secondary and higher education, economic development, and state agencies and entities that are successfully engaging employers or successfully operating internship programs; (ii) cooperate with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and identified partners in carrying out the authority's responsibilities under Item 113.T for employer-focused activities that expand availability of and access to paid and credit-bearing internships and corresponding pathways leading to full-time Virginia-based employment; (iii) explore strategies in Virginia and elsewhere on successful institutional, regional, statewide or sector-based internship programs; (iv) gather and report consistent data across institutions regarding current institutional internship practices, scale, and outcomes; (v) develop internship readiness educational resources, delivery methods, and outreach and awareness activities for students and institutional career development personnel; and (vi) pursue shared services or other efficiency initiatives, including technological solutions. The Council and VEDP, in consultation with partners, shall establish goals and metrics for internships and work-based learning opportunities for employers, students, and institutions that support an increased number of students and employers participating in internships and work-based

learning opportunities while ensuring the quality of the program. Institutions shall set goals and progress measures aligned with the metrics established by the Council and VEDP related to increasing the number of students participating in internships and work-based learning opportunities and shall develop a plan to ensure that existing programs and any new programs developed include internships or a work-based learning opportunity where appropriate. Institutions shall report to the Council annually regarding progress on these goals. Beginning in fiscal year 2027, the Council and VEDP shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations and Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations on progress of meeting the goals and metrics, including institutional progress, and expenses incurred for the activities outlined in this item by November 1 of each year.

DRAFT

# CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

# ANTICIPATED TOPICS FOR DECEMBER 2025 BOARD MEETING

# OPEN DISCUSSION (BOARD ROUNDTABLE)