

# Pulaski County Virginia

## Workforce Development Plan

Workforce problems are not unique to Pulaski County nor can they be traced to a singular cause. Because there are multiple causes to the problem, there are multiple solutions to addressing the issue. Steps that Pulaski County can take to increase the size and quality of the available workforce includes expanding workforce participation by local residents as well as attracting new residents to the County:

- ✓ **Indicates endorsement by the Pulaski County Economic Development Authority at their October 23, 2018 meeting.**

### Increasing Local Workforce Participation Rates

- ✓ 1. Expanding Child Care Options - Significantly expanding child care options to provide mothers and fathers a ready option for both parents to work while raising young children.
- 2. Providing Elder Care - Continuing operation of the Adult Day Care facility to give those caring for elderly parents the ability to continue working
- 3. Building a Vision of the Benefits of Working - Publication of testimonials from those who have recently joined the Pulaski County workforce, describing how it feels to be able to be financially self-sufficient.
- ✓ 4. Employment of Inmates – Providing job referrals for inmates currently working for localities would help local firms assess the benefit of hiring former inmates. Providing wrap around counseling services along with utilizing homeless services, food pantries and transportation assistance could make a difference in the lives of approximately 500 inmates being released each month.
- ✓ 5. Reaching the Disenfranchised - Recognizing the disconnection between those who are in and those out of the workforce. Persons not currently participating in the workforce may not be aware of employment opportunities or the services offered at Workforce Centers and/or temp agencies. Suggested advertising options for available jobs and workforce services could focus on places likely to be utilized by persons not in the workforce such as: the Pulaski County courthouse, Social Services, New River Valley Community Services Board, New River Valley Community Corrections and Pretrial Services, New River Valley Public Defender’s Office, Daily Bread, the Free Clinic, Taking it to the Streets Homeless Ministry, New River Jail visitation rooms and local convenience stores.
- ✓ 6. Flexible Employment Practices – Employers can also be a major driver in addressing workforce issues through utilizing non-traditional venues for advertising available jobs, flexible hiring standards when considering the employment of persons with criminal records, and considering job sharing arrangements, allowing for less than eight-hour per day employment arrangements.
- ✓ 7. Transportation to and from Work – Having more than one means of getting to a from work has been identified as a major impediment to long-term employment in interviews with the four staffing agencies serving Pulaski County. Pulaski Area Transit and the availability of several surplus PAT vans are resources that could be utilized to provide transportation services to a from work.

### Attracting New Residents to Pulaski County

- 8. Regional Marketing - A regional marketing campaign could be held to advertise available jobs in localities within reasonable driving distance from Pulaski County employers, which have relatively low workforce participation rates, and high unemployment rates. Suggestions would Bland, Grayson and Tazewell counties. To be effective, an advertising campaign should be combined with some form of temporary housing allowing employees the option to remain in Pulaski County one or more nights per week, coordinated ride sharing and/or commuter bus, and local realtor packets describing available housing for those interested in moving their families to Pulaski County.
  
- 9. Recruitment of VT and RU students – Most students are focused on the university environments whether in class or enjoying the night life. Organization of area tours could provide greater understanding of what it is like to live and work in Pulaski County and Virginia’s New River Valley. In addition to a general awareness program, direct marketing of employment opportunities to students affected by academic dismissal could provide them with a needed lifeline during a difficult time, the opportunity to retake failed classes at another institution, the ability to pay off student loans, and the opportunity to continue to live independently.