

Growth and Opportunity Virginia Board

September 15, 2026
Governance and
Policy Committee
Meeting



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Better Communities

Opening

- a) Call to Order
- b) Roll Call
- c) Public Comment

Consent Agenda – *Action Item*

- a) Approval of May 19, 2026, meeting minutes

Discussion Items

- a) Talent Attraction Strategies
- b) Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy (SCALE) Board referred scope and budget categories for alignment review

Talent Attraction and Retention Strategies

At the March 24th meeting of the GO Virginia State Board, the topic of Talent Attraction and Retention was referred to the Governance and Policy Committee for discussion and consideration.

Since program inception, GO Virginia has funded three talent attraction and retention focused projects.

Regional Talent Strategies

Region 2

This project included several aspects, including development of toolkits for employers, outreach to K-12 institutions and businesses, out of market conferences, and implementation of a CRM program.

The talent attraction aspect of this project is anchored by development of a regional talent portal: get2knownoke.com.

Outcomes:*

People Trained: 128 (50 committed)
Employees Upskilled: 361 (20 committed)
Jobs Created/Filled: 106 (40 committed)
Businesses Served 40 (100 committed)

LRBA Regional Talent Portal

Region 2

This project is focused exclusively on development of a regional talent portal.

Outcomes:

Jobs Created: 50 committed
Businesses Served: 20 committed

Start in Hampton Roads

Region 5

This project is focused exclusively on development of a regional Talent Portal.

Outcomes:

New Interns Placed: 20 committed
Jobs Created: 70 committed
Businesses Served: 35 committed

TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION EFFORTS

September 15, 2026

VEDP ENRICHES LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND THE COMMONWEALTH THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXCELLENCE

VEDP accomplishes this through:



Encouraging **coordination** of economic development efforts among local, regional, and state partners



Collaborating with localities to develop **project-ready sites** for manufacturing and supply chain projects



Administering **performance-based incentives** that encourage job creation and capital investment



Providing **grants or custom workforce solutions** to address recruitment and training needs, and **analysis and insight** on education and labor market alignment



Developing recommended **economic development policies and strategies** to position Virginia and its regions for growth



Encouraging and assisting the **retention and expansion** of existing Virginia firms



Assisting Virginia companies to establish and/or expand international sales (i.e., **trade development**)



Conducting **research** to understand and effectively present Virginia's competitive advantages



Marketing Virginia to raise awareness¹ of the Commonwealth's advantages for business and cultivate new leads



Recruiting out-of-state firms to select Virginia for new job-creating projects

FY25-29 TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

1

Robust State Growth

Position Virginia to achieve a growth rate among that of the top 10 states in the U.S.

2

Every Region Wins

Ensure that every region participates in the growth of the Commonwealth

3

Best State Business Climate

Cultivate a leading business climate and sector-specific ecosystems

2

4

Top State for Talent

Establish Virginia as a top state for talent retention, attraction, development, and alignment

5

Most Innovative, Collaborative, and Effective State EDO

Solidify VEDP's position as one of America's top state EDOs through an innovative strategy, collaborative approach, and effective outcomes

VEDP'S STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COMMONWEALTH SETS OUT THREE COMPLEMENTARY TALENT-FOCUSED STRATEGIES

Attract and retain talent

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

Align talent development to employer needs

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

Activate individuals' potential by increasing supports

Increase wraparound supports (e.g., childcare, transportation) to ensure Virginians participate in the labor force



According to corporate executives and site selection consultants, workforce considerations like labor costs and skilled labor are among the top location factors.

Source: Area Development's 21st Annual Consultants Survey and 39th Corporate Survey:
<https://www.areadevelopment.com/Corporate-Consultants-Survey-Results/q1-2025/39th-annual-corporate-21st-annual-consultants-surveys-what-business-leaders-and-consultants-are-saying-about-site-selection.shtml>

COMBINED RATINGS* CORPORATE SURVEY

Site Selection Factors	2025	2024
Ranking		
1. Labor costs	92.00%	97.9 (3)
2. Quality of life	90.19%	98 (T2)
3. Energy availability	90.00%	100 (1)
4. Energy costs	90.00%	81.6 (T9)
5. Skilled labor	89.59%	89.8 (T5)
6. Responsive state & local government	88.24%	93.9 (4)
7. ICT, Broadband	88.00%	98(T2)
8. Environmental regulations	86.28%	N/A
9. Construction costs	86.27%	98 (T2)
10. Property tax	84.31%	89.8 (T5)
11. Highway	80.00%	85.7 (T7)
12. Corporate tax rate	76.47%	83.7 (8)
13. State and local incentives	76.00%	87.8 (6)
14. Available land	72.55%	81.6 (T9)
15. Available buildings	72.00%	85.7 (T7)
16. Raw materials	70.00%	79.6 (T10)
17. Technical schools	68.63%	69.4 (T13)
18. Expedited permitting	68.63%	79.6 (T10)
19. Right-to-work	68.08%	69.4 (T13)
20. Low union profile	68.00%	75.5 (11)
21. Training programs	64.71%	71.5 (12)
22. Proximity to suppliers	60.00%	58.4 (18)
23. Sales tax	56.86%	N/A
24. Proximity to major markets	56.86%	63.3 (14)
25. Water availability	55.10%	55.1 (19)
26. Weather hazards	55.10%	62.5 (15)
27. Shovel-ready, certified sites	52.94%	59.2 (16)
28. Airport	46.00%	59.2 (17)
29. Rail	33.34%	42.8 (20)
30. Port, Waterway	26.53%	41.7 (21)

* All figures are percentages and are the total of the "very important" and "important" ratings of the Area Development Corporate Survey and are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

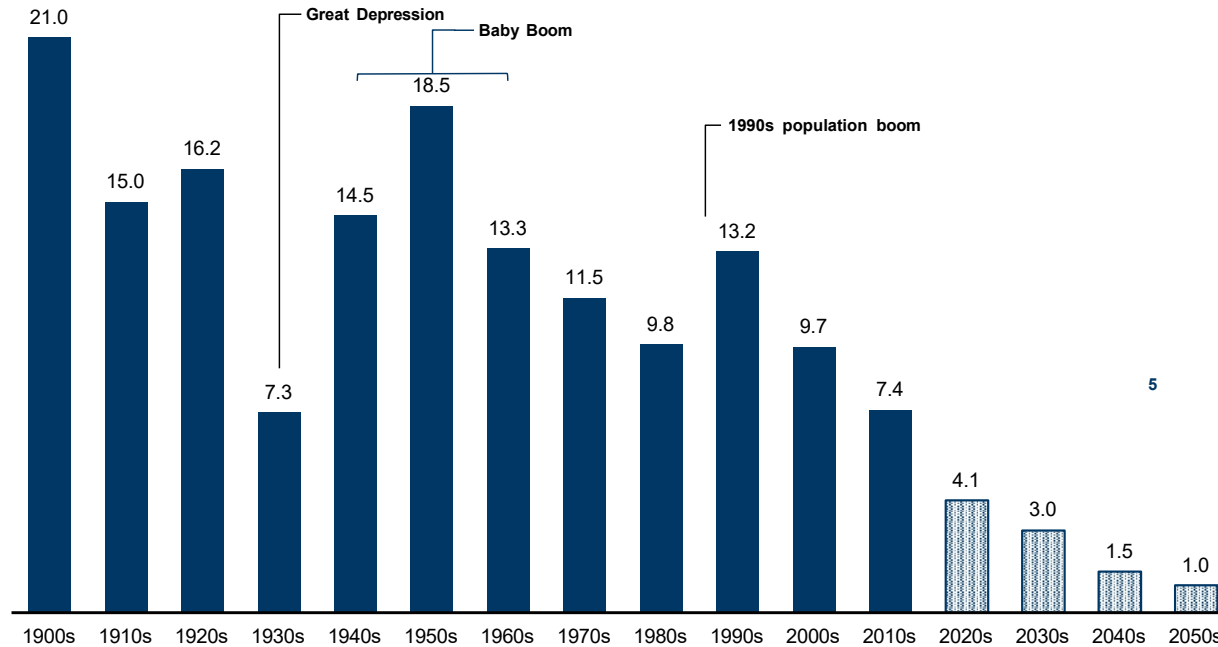
COMBINED RATINGS* CONSULTANT SURVEY

Site Selection Factors	2025	2024
Ranking		
1. Energy availability	100.00%	97.9 (3)
2. Available land	100.00%	98 (T2)
3. Skilled labor	98.44%	100 (1)
4. Expedited permitting	98.44%	81.6 (T9)
5. Proximity to suppliers	96.88%	89.8 (T5)
6. Energy costs	95.31%	93.9 (4)
7. Responsive state & local government	95.31%	98(T2)
8. Property tax	95.24%	N/A
9. State and local incentives	95.23%	98 (T2)
10. Highway	93.76%	89.8 (T5)
11. Environmental regulations	93.75%	85.7 (T7)
12. Proximity to major markets	92.19%	83.7 (8)
13. Labor costs	90.63%	87.8 (6)
14. Available buildings	84.13%	81.6 (T9)
15. Water availability	81.26%	85.7 (T7)
16. Construction costs	80.64%	79.6 (T10)
17. Technical schools	79.69%	69.4 (T13)
18. Shovel-ready, certified sites	78.12%	79.6 (T10)
19. Airport	75.00%	69.4 (T13)
20. Raw materials	73.44%	75.5 (11)
21. Training programs	69.84%	71.5 (12)
22. Corporate tax rate	69.84%	58.4 (18)
23. Sales tax	68.26%	N/A
24. Low union profile	65.63%	63.3 (14)
25. ICT, Broadband	64.06%	55.1 (19)
26. Weather hazards	64.06%	62.5 (15)
27. Quality of life	61.90%	59.2 (16)
28. Right-to-work	58.73%	59.2 (17)
29. Port, Waterway	47.62%	42.8 (20)
30. Rail	46.88%	41.7 (21)

* All figures are percentages and are the total of the "very important" and "important" ratings of the Area Development Consultant Survey and are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

AS POPULATION GROWTH DECELERATES, DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES ARE POISED TO INTENSIFY

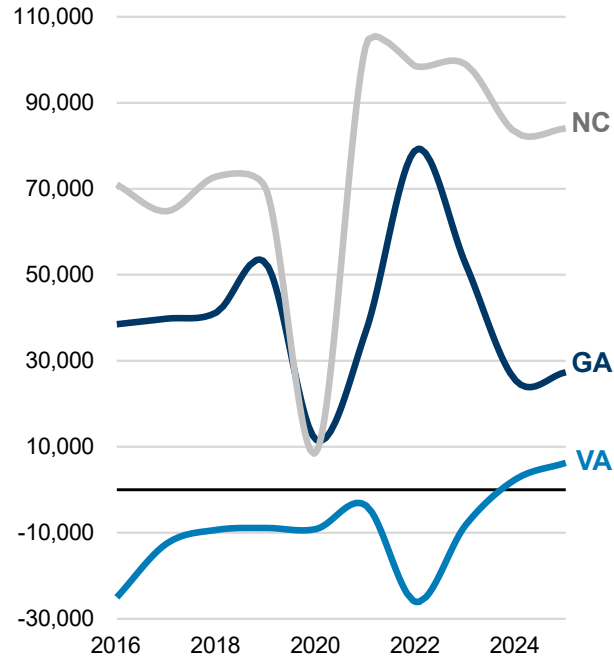
U.S. resident population growth between decennial census
%, (1900-2050, forecast)



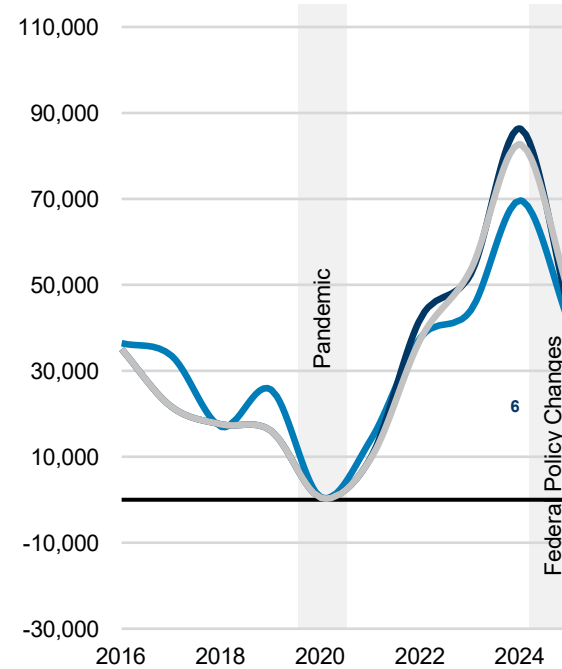
Source: Census Bureau Population Estimates Program, National Population Projections

VIRGINIA TRAILS PEER STATES IN BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, THOUGH THE GAP IS CLOSING

Net domestic migration (2016 – July 2025)



Net international migration (2016 – July 2025)*



Source: Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (as of April 2026)

IN 2024, VEDP CONTRACTED WITH DCI TO CONDUCT A SURVEY OF EXTERNAL TALENT ABOUT THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF VIRGINIA

Key Takeaways

- Virginia is viewed positively as a place to visit, live, and work but is **largely unknown** to talent in the target talent markets
- Talent is **not confident that Virginia can address all of the “must haves”** when considering relocation, namely housing at an affordable price point, good salaries relative to the cost of living, and diverse job and career advancement opportunities
- There are **contradictory perceptions of Virginia as a place to live and work** (i.e., liberal/conservative; urban/rural; white collar/blue collar), resulting in the lack of a strong overarching identity and image of the Commonwealth
- Virginia has an opportunity to appeal to **military/military spouses, former students, and visitors**
- A marketing approach must be multi-pronged, leveraging both internal and external resources and tools, but most importantly, evoke a **strong identity and messaging on “why Virginia?”**

Stakeholders identified a need for

- A stronger, modern talent brand
- Better storytelling around job opportunities
- More proactive talent attraction marketing

Next Steps

- Test messaging and channels in real markets (7 priority out-of-state talent markets)
- Focus on jobseekers in high-demand industries and quality-of-life seekers looking for affordability, safety and lifestyle improvement
- Use paid media, earned media and storytelling to compare which approaches drive attention and engagement
- Generate measurable results
- Build a case for a future statewide campaign and/or regionally customized talent attraction campaigns

BOTH PILOTS FOLLOWED A SHARED, RESEARCH-DRIVEN FRAMEWORK, WHILE ALLOWING FOR REGIONAL CUSTOMIZATION

Key Takeaways

The pilots helped clarify where future campaigns should focus, which tactics are easiest to scale, and how Virginia's talent story should be positioned.

- **Paid media drives results.** As the most effective and scalable channel for talent attraction, it is essential for awareness and lead generation, especially in new markets.
- **Lifestyle messaging is powerful and can outperform job messaging.** Talent prioritizes affordability and lifestyle.
- **Jobs still matter, but they need better framing.** Job opportunities remain a core motivator but must be paired with clear lifestyle benefits and storytelling.
- **Target markets are validated.** NYC and California consistently emerged as top-performing markets, confirming original research targeting strategy.
- **Regional customization is critical.** Campaigns must reflect unique regional value propositions, and a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work.

Overall performance

Across both pilots and supporting efforts, the campaigns generated measurable reach, traffic and lead volume in roughly five months

- 5.8M+ targeted ad impressions
- 87K website visits
- 2,200+ talent leads
- 56M+ earned media impressions

Exceeded DCI benchmarks across key metrics

Next Steps

- Use pilot results to create a messaging framework for Top State for Talent as well as a playbook for regions to customize (adding in their unique imagery, key talent differentiation, etc.)

IN 2025-2026, VEDP AND DCI LAUNCHED TWO REGIONAL PILOTS

Hampton Roads

- No prior talent attraction infrastructure
- DCI created:
 - New brand presence
 - Dedicated microsite (StartInHamptonRoads.com)
- Target audiences:
 - Engineers, maritime talent, transitioning military
- Key Results:
 - ~1,400 leads generated in a few months
 - Paid media drove 8x more traffic than organic
- Strong engagement from:
 - Engineers (top-performing occupation)
 - NYC and California (top markets)
- **Key Insight:** Paid media is essential for launching new talent brands and generating early traction

Roanoke

- Built on existing Get2KnowNoke campaign
- Focus on enhancing:
 - Paid targeting
 - Organic social strategy
- Key Results:
 - 4M+ impressions
 - 62K website sessions
 - 850 conversions (form submissions)
- Top audiences:
 - Tech talent, healthcare workers, teachers
 - NYC and California markets ⁸
- **Key Insight:** Lifestyle messaging outperformed job-focused messaging in this market

IN AUGUST 2026, VEDP CONDUCTED FOCUS GROUPS OF NINE VIRGINIA REGIONS ENGAGED IN TALENT ATTRACTION

Participating Regions

- Central Virginia
- Greater Richmond
- Hampton Roads
- Lynchburg Region
- New River Valley
- Northern Shenandoah Valley
- Northern Virginia
- Roanoke Region
- Shenandoah Valley

Themes heard consistently across both sessions

- **Quality of life is the most effective entry point.** Participants repeatedly cited lifestyle, outdoor access, community character, schools and ease of living as the messages that first attract attention.
- **A place story needs career proof.** Job access, employer visibility, priority industries and credible career pathways are needed to convert interest into action.
- **Retention and attraction are inseparable.** Students, interns, alumni, young professionals, veterans and former residents were viewed as especially actionable audiences.
- **Capacity is the limiting factor.** Many initiatives are managed by staff with broader responsibilities, and even strong toolkits will be difficult to use without flexible funding or implementation support.
- **Regions need adaptable infrastructure, not a uniform campaign.** Participants were most interested in shared data, reusable evidence, cost-of-living tools, networks and measurement support that can be localized.

THANK YOU!



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Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy

- a) At the June 9, 2026, meeting of the GO Virginia Board, the Board took action to partially approve the Region 4 and 5 per capita project “Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy (SCALE).
- b) The partial approval was in line with the application workgroup reviewer recommendation, which stated:
“Based on the workgroup discussion and application review, the workgroup recommends approval of the application at a reduced award amount of \$154,391. This amount will be cost shared by Regions 4 and 5 utilizing their Per Capita Fund allocations. This would support an amended budget and scope that includes completing the market study to validate the program focus, establishing the Energy Growth Council, developing an interactive energy mapping tool, and conducting Soft-Landing activities. Activities and outcomes will be adjusted based on the revised scope at the time of contract. Further, the committee recommends with this approval that the remaining scope and budget categories be referred to the Governance and Policy Committee for alignment review with the GO Virginia Board Policies and Program Guidelines.”

Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy

- a) The remaining scope of work referred to in the workgroup recommendation were the following items:
1. Trade Shows
 2. Conference/Trade Show Travel
 3. Contract Services for external lead generation consultants and logistics and planning consultants
 4. Computer software and hardware
 5. The second year of salary for the Director of Ecosystem Development and a 2nd year for the Program and Business Development Representative
 6. Fringe and additional salary costs

Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy

a) The scope of work and objectives described in the application appropriately align with the Cluster Scale-Up investment strategy. This strategy is defined by the GO Virginia Program Manual:

GO Virginia supports projects that help existing businesses scale or accelerate the development of emerging industry subclusters within targeted industry clusters. Cluster scale-up focuses on second-stage companies—businesses that have moved beyond startup and are ready to grow, commercialize proven products, and reach new markets or legacy industries. Firms in these industry clusters may need help with:

- *Retooling or expanding production*
 - *Strengthening supply chains*
 - *Accessing capital or workforce*
 - *Reaching new customer or supplier networks*
- Scale-up projects must align with a region's priority industry sectors and show how growth in one business or area can trigger growth in related sectors, such as distribution, logistics, or services.*

GO Virginia may also support efforts to accelerate emerging or nascent industries that are new to the region or in early stages of commercialization. These projects should be collaborative and demonstrate the same high standards for impact, job creation, and return on investment as other implementation projects.

Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy

a) Outcomes associated with Cluster Scale-Up are identified in program guidance as the following:

Definitions

Number of jobs created	The number of jobs that will be created by businesses supported by the effort.
Number of businesses attracted	Total number of unique new businesses relocating to the region(s) as a result of the project's work.
Number of existing businesses expanded	The total number of existing businesses or startups that have demonstrated business growth specifically due to the effort
Number of businesses served	The number of unique firms provided with targeted and/ or individualized business assistance.
Total funds raised by businesses served	The total dollar amount in funds raised by the businesses served as part of the effort. This may include venture capital, research and development funds, SBIR funding, grants, private investment, or other sources of funds to be used by the businesses served.

Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy

a) The GO Virginia program has previously funded two projects that include activities that were omitted from the project's budget by the workgroup:

a) Offshore Wind Supply Chain:

1. Salaries (\$425,288 over two years)
2. Trade Shows (\$40,000)
3. Conference/Trade Show Travel (\$15,000)

a) Hampton roads Playbook: Defense

1. Contract services for International Representation (\$120,000)
2. Contract services for Defense Tech Regional Trip Documentations and Report (\$50,000)
3. Salaries (\$131,950 over two years)

Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy

a) Staff Recommendation:

The Committee should direct staff to issue guidance to clarify that cluster scale-up projects should be focused on a primary activity with marketing being a qualifying supporting activity for the initiative and that projects that are focused predominantly on marketing shall not be considered eligible for GO Virginia funding.

Upcoming Expiring Terms and Board Membership Turnover Report

Recently Expired Terms:

Kenneth Johnson, Expired 06/30/2026 – Eligible for Reappointment

New Member Appointments:

Gubernatorial Appointees:

Secretary Carrie Chenery, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

Secretary Katie Frazier, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

Secretary Jessica Looman, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

Secretary Jeffery Smith, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

John King, Expires 06/30/2030 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Upcoming Expiring Terms and Board Membership Turnover Report

Upcoming Expiring Terms:

Speaker of the House Appointees:

Jonathan Peterson, Expiration 11/4/2026 – Eligible for Reappointment

Senate Rules Committee Appointees:

Heywood Fralin, Expiration 11/4/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Benjamin Davenport, Expiration 11/4/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Gubernatorial Appointees:

Nancy Howell Agee,, Expiration 06/30/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Emily O'Quinn, Expiration 06/30/2027 – Eligible for Reappointment

Cliff Fleet, Expiration 06/30/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Upcoming Committee Meetings

The Governance and Policy Committee has one meeting remaining for calendar year 2026 and will need to adopt a new meeting schedule for calendar year 2027 at the next meeting.

The Governance and Policy Committee Charter states the following:

"The Committee shall meet at minimum twice annually preceding the regularly scheduled meeting of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board. The Committee may call special meetings that shall be conducted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Virginia Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) unless exempt pursuant to §2.2-3711. A.48 of the Code of Virginia."

Upcoming Governance and Policy Committee Meetings

1

November 17, 2026
@11:00 (virtual)