

WV Jobs Network

Good people. Good jobs. Good workplaces.

Need

Job seekers say there are no jobs, and they must leave West Virginia to find work, while at the same time West Virginia employers say they cannot find workers to hire. That people are experiencing both seemingly opposite realities points to a need for broad, cross-sector investigation and collaboration to address this disconnect.

Purpose

Founded in 2021, the West Virginia Jobs Network connects great talent to good jobs through curating high-quality resources, creating needed tools, sharing promising practices, providing coaching, and hosting an annual conference for learning and sharing -- convening partners, employers, and job seekers to retain talent across the mountains.

Function

The WV Jobs Network builds network connections, resources, and learning around workforce development and supports Network Partners to offer direct services to employers and job seekers. The network intentionally brings together students, job seekers, and other stakeholders at various points in the career journey and connects them with a variety of organizations and individuals to build genuine, long-term, mutually beneficial relationships and improve outcomes for all stakeholders in the network.

- **The WV Jobs Network engages a coalition of partners committed to collaboration.** The network is an active learning lab that hosts training opportunities, promotes best practices, and encourages collaborative development and dissemination of tools, projects, and programs. The network lifts and centers the voices of participants and community stakeholders in shaping workforce-related policies, programs, and goals.
- **WV Jobs Network Partners provide direct support to job seekers and employers.** The members of the network take a user-centered approach, directly engaging with individuals and organizations to understand what services are most useful to them and how to braid together existing programs and resources to strategically address gaps and opportunities.

Structure and Participation

The Steering Committee currently consists of representatives from High Rocks, Coalfield Development, Generation WV, First2 Network, First Ascent and the Appalachian Promise Alliance. The Steering Committee previously also had representation from Volunteer WV and the WV Community Development Hub. High Rocks serves as the organizer for the WV Jobs Network.

The West Virginia Jobs Network welcomes new Network Partners and invites new and existing collaborators to participate in all network activities, including the annual conference and network committees. Committees meet virtually for one hour each month to develop and implement network initiatives. Current committees include Conference Planning, Collective Impact, Certifications, and Steering. The Steering Committee participates in a quarterly in-person meeting. For more information, contact wvjn@highrocks.org.

Role of Network Partners

The West Virginia Jobs Network is open to all stakeholders throughout the region who support the vision and values of the network. West Virginia Jobs Network Partners can participate in any of the following ways:

- Build comprehensive workforce pathways, develop good jobs with a living wage, invite new partners, and build capacity among fellow organizations.
- Provide direct support to students, job seekers, and employers at multiple points on the workforce pathway and work big picture to build a more successful system for all.
- Attend and/or present at the annual conference and other training and networking opportunities hosted by the network and Network Partners.
- Attend monthly committee meetings to work on collaborative network projects.
- Pursue a Collective Impact approach to workforce development, including using relevant shared metrics like workers trained or businesses improved.
- Participate in learning exchanges with Network Partners.
- Seek and leverage shared funding opportunities.
- Understand, utilize, and develop workforce resources and models offered and used by Network Partners. Some examples include: Career Connector (Generation WV), WRAPS workforce development model (Coalfield Development), Power Skills Certification (High Rocks), Appalachian Connect (Appalachian Promise Alliance), WV Invests free tuition and Earn and Learn program (WV Higher Education Commission), WV AmeriCorps Tuition Waiver (Volunteer WV), remote work support (First Ascent), college student success (First2 Network), wage and training reimbursement programs (Workforce WV), Resource Library (WV Community Development Hub).
- Actively participate in the continuing process to refine, develop, and reflect on the values, purpose, and function of the network as we learn and grow together.