WORKING TOGETHER
AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Virginia Western Community College and
Goodwill Industries of the Valleys
Partnership Case Study Report

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Community Colleges Count

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Workforce Strategies Initiative
at the Aspen Institute

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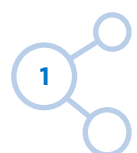
INTRODUCTION

The city of Roanoke in southwestern Virginia grew up as a transportation hub, first as an intersection of wagon trails for pioneering Americans on the move, and then as a commerce hub linking three railroads together. In today's Roanoke, which still serves as a railway hub, an interstate artery connects with a network of major highways in all directions. A map of the area shows separate and overlapping hub-and-spoke networks of roads and rail lines radiating outward in all directions, connecting businesses with customers and people with one another in a regional economy.

Similarly, Roanoke-based Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) and Goodwill Industries of the Valleys (Goodwill) each have established themselves as hubs, with relationships focused on education and training that radiate outward to connect employers who need talent with prospective workers eager to learn skills for a new career. The executives who lead VWCC and Goodwill see these relationships as essential elements of the region's workforce system. And thanks to their similar visions and a federal grant that created an opportunity to collaborate, VWCC and Goodwill are today the hub of a growing network of relationships connecting underserved neighbors, employers, social service referral organizations, and workforce agencies.

It might have turned out very differently. The leaders of Goodwill and VWCC, the two largest workforce organizations in the region, each came to crossroads that offered a variety of strategic choices. Instead of joining their institutions together to build an integrated and interconnected regional workforce system, the leaders could have held differing visions, resulting in overlapping, duplicative, independent networks — like building separate and disconnected highway and railway networks parallel to one another.

The story of the Roanoke effort offers a fresh perspective and valuable lessons for community college and nonprofit workforce leaders who are interested in launching or improving partnership strategies.

"We had to get over the fear that we're competitors, and this mind-shift in thinking led to our partnership," observed Bruce Phipps, president and CEO of Goodwill. "We trusted the college because we were already intersected in many ways," he added.

His counterpart at Virginia Western Community College, President Robert Sandel, also rejected a go-it-alone vision, choosing to launch joint training programs at Goodwill's facility. "Others said, 'Why would you want to put a program on somebody else's campus? Aren't you giving them all of the glory?'" Looking back on the success of the college's growing alliance with Goodwill, he concluded, "It's a textbook case of working together without any type of hesitancy, not worrying about who gets the credit, just worrying about how we make a difference in peoples' lives."

The grant-funded partnership between Virginia Western Community College and Goodwill grows out of Courses to Employment (C2E), a research project of the Aspen Institute Workforce Strategies Initiative that has studied community college-nonprofit organization partnerships. The story of the Roanoke effort offers a fresh perspective and valuable lessons for community college and nonprofit workforce leaders who are interested in launching or improving partnership strategies.
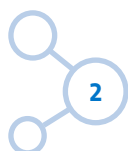
BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Across America, millions of unemployed and low-wage workers are at risk of being left behind because they lack the technical skills, credentials, and connections needed to improve their career opportunities. Both community colleges and community-based nonprofit workforce providers have a mission to serve these workers, and they offer complementary assets and capabilities. Since 2007, The Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative (AspenWSI), in its ongoing *Courses to Employment* research project, has examined partnership strategies that combine the capabilities of the two types of organizations.

Previously, AspenWSI documented seven C2E partnership programs and has administered a national survey of 188 C2E partnerships. For this case study on the partnership between Virginia Western Community College and Goodwill, AspenWSI teamed with Achieving the Dream (ATD), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn college certificates or degrees. AspenWSI and ATD staff researchers developed this case study based on 16 interviews with staff members of VWCC and Goodwill and employer and student stakeholder representatives, as well as through an analysis of program data and documents.

AspenWSI initially developed this case study as a learning tool for a US Department of Labor–funded consortium of seven community colleges that feature C2E strategies. Northern Virginia Community College leads that consortium. This report supplements the initial learning tool with information shared by staff of Virginia Western Community College and Goodwill at a site visit by members of the consortium in March 2015 and with additional program data collected and reported in May 2015.

OVERVIEW OF THIS CASE STUDY

Working Together and Making a Difference tells the story of how a community college and a workforce development nonprofit organization built upon a shared vision to launch joint training programs that connect community members' needs with those of businesses. It describes how the partners:

- Built a foundation of trust that enabled them to quickly seize opportunities together, including a major federal grant to launch a Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) training program;

- Blended complementary financial, human, and physical resources and assets in joint programs designed to achieve strategically important objectives for each organization;

- Knitted together a broad network of supportive stakeholders who also benefit from the partnership initiatives; and

- Encountered and addressed challenges during the early operations phase, as well as the ripple effect of changes needed by each organization to continually improve their joint programs.

The case study illustrates the leadership and organizational dynamics of a new partnership. At the same time, it also describes how the partnership has used data and mutual accountability to evolve together into new patterns that have begun to generate rising enrollments and employment outcomes for participants in the initial joint program offering. It closes with reflections on the lessons this story can offer to nonprofits and community colleges that are forming partnerships, pursuing grants together, and seeking to evolve existing informal alliances into integrated, operational partnerships.
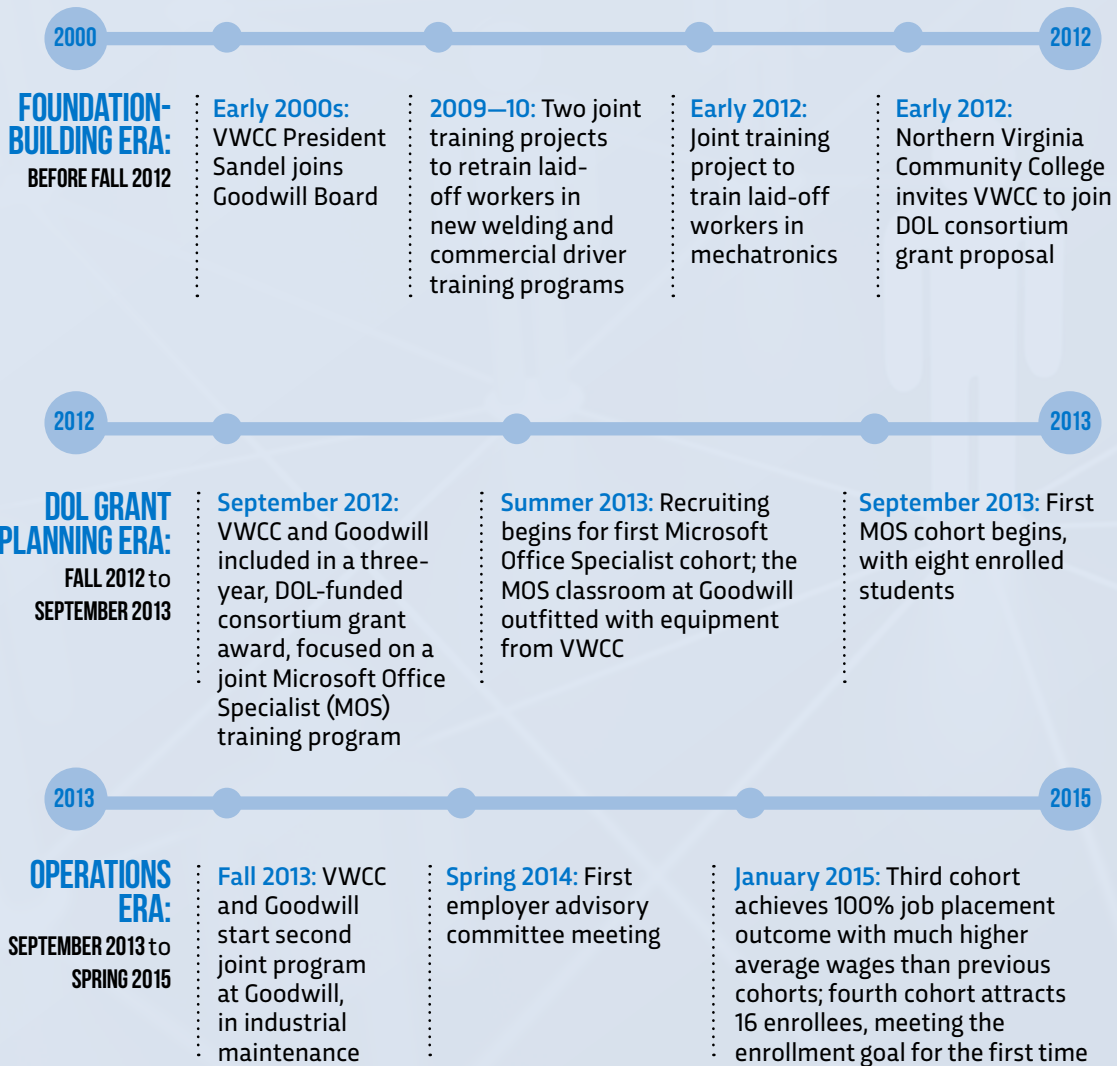
Introducing the Partner Organizations

Virginia Western Community College and Goodwill each serve many thousands of students or jobseekers in a greater Roanoke region that has a total population of 300,000. VWCC leaders view its workforce and economic development mission on par with its mission to prepare students to transfer to four-year institutions. The college enrolls 12,800 credit students in several dozen college-credit degree and certificate programs in many fields, and it enrolls more than 2,000 students annually in a variety of noncredit job training and community programs. It has a 70-acre campus in Roanoke and utilizes other community locations for workforce training and high school dual enrollment programs.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, like most Goodwill affiliates, is best known for its retail stores. In addition, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys became a major regional workforce service provider during the past decade, primarily by operating one-stop job centers throughout western Virginia for the Western Virginia Workforce Investment Board. In this contractual role, which ended in June 2015, Goodwill matched the needs of employers and jobseekers and helped place more than 3,000 unemployed workers in new jobs each year. Goodwill recommended voucher-based tuition funding to enable some of its workforce clients to enroll in job training programs run by 12 approved providers in the region (including VWCC). However, it did not directly operate comprehensive job training programs, although many other Goodwill organizations do. For information about missions, programs, services and budgets, see Appendix A, "Partner Organization Profiles."

EVOLVING THE PARTNERSHIP OVER TIME

The timeline highlights milestones in building and expanding the VWCC-Goodwill partnership. Like the case study, it is divided into three distinct periods: the foundation-building years before a US Department of Labor (DOL) grant award in Fall 2012, the grant planning period through August 2013, and program operations through Spring 2015.

2000 ———————————————————— **2012**

FOUNDATION-BUILDING ERA:
BEFORE FALL 2012

Early 2000s: VWCC President Sandel joins Goodwill Board

2009—10: Two joint training projects to retrain laid-off workers in new welding and commercial driver training programs

Early 2012: Joint training project to train laid-off workers in mechatronics

Early 2012: Northern Virginia Community College invites VWCC to join DOL consortium grant proposal

2012 ———————————————————— **2013**

DOL GRANT PLANNING ERA:
FALL 2012 to **SEPTEMBER 2013**

September 2012: VWCC and Goodwill included in a three-year, DOL-funded consortium grant award, focused on a joint Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) training program

Summer 2013: Recruiting begins for first Microsoft Office Specialist cohort; the MOS classroom at Goodwill outfitted with equipment from VWCC

September 2013: First MOS cohort begins, with eight enrolled students

2013 ———————————————————— **2015**

OPERATIONS ERA:
SEPTEMBER 2013 to **SPRING 2015**

Fall 2013: VWCC and Goodwill start second joint program at Goodwill, in industrial maintenance

Spring 2014: First employer advisory committee meeting

January 2015: Third cohort achieves 100% job placement outcome with much higher average wages than previous cohorts; fourth cohort attracts 16 enrollees, meeting the enrollment goal for the first time

The Foundation-Building Era: Before Fall 2012

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS CREATE A READINESS TO ACT TOGETHER

Before the initiative to develop a long-term partnership, leaders at multiple levels of VWCC and Goodwill had formed trusting personal relationships through limited, shorter-term engagements, such as a commercial driving license training in 2010 and a mechatronics program in 2012. These experiences and the willingness of VWCC and Goodwill leaders to prioritize community needs over those of either organization paved the way to respond quickly to new opportunities together. Such an opportunity arose in Spring 2012, when Robert Templin, then president of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), called Dr. Sandel to confirm VWCC's interest in joining a NOVA-led grant consortium being formed around partnerships between colleges and community-based organizations. When Templin asked about VWCC's joining with Goodwill, there was no hesitation. Sandel knew Phipps and had served on Goodwill's board for several years. He quickly embraced this opportunity.

At the same time, Leah Coffman, coordinator for VWCC's Workforce Development Division, was also primed for an expanded partnership with Goodwill. Recently, she had attended a national workforce conference together with Linda Matthews, her counterpart at Goodwill, and the two of them had come to an "ah-ha" realization: They had complementary assets and did not need to build out overlapping capabilities separately to address areas where the other had strengths. As noted, the two organizations had previously worked together on temporary projects to retrain laid-off workers, even if they had yet to form a long-term organizational alliance. Coffman was familiar with Goodwill's ability to offer comprehensive supports, such as case management and job placement, while Goodwill's Matthews knew the college had more capacity and resources to develop skills training.

These existing personal relationships enabled the college and Goodwill to respond quickly to the grant opportunity with NOVA. In Fall 2012, the US Department of Labor awarded a four-year, $12 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant to NOVA's consortium of seven colleges, including VWCC. Many of the consortium members' grant-funded initiatives feature a joint training program between a college and a nearby nonprofit workforce organization.

## TRUST AND MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY HELP BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION

Just like highways and railroads, partnerships need strong foundations. Leaders at all levels in VWCC and Goodwill recognized from the beginning that trust is a key ingredient for a strong foundation, and they used a similar approach to building trust.

President Sandel summarized the college's approach, saying, "When you are working on a project together and you say what you are going to do and then you do it, that builds trust." The college's director of grants, Marilyn Herbert-Ashton, reflected this philosophy when summarizing the college's community-based strategy: "It's all about relationships and trust." Leah Coffman, who spearheaded the partnership's program development for VWCC, added, "You need to maintain [a] trusting relationship — which means that your partner will deliver on promises, and both agree that you are accountable to one another."

At Goodwill, Mary Ann Gilmer, vice president of workforce development, noted that building trust "is an evolving process … now we speak each other's language more than we used to … understanding each other's culture."

Various actions, taken by both sides early on, helped strengthen a foundation of trust:

- **Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities through continual dialogue:** This means that "everyone knows what he or she is supposed to be doing," as one Goodwill staff member observed.

- **Asking for input from the partner, and being open and flexible about changing in response to partner's suggestions:** In fact, Goodwill and VWCC have created a "roles tool" that they continuously update and consult.

- **Using "we" language when describing the program to external audiences:** This underscored the sense of shared mission.
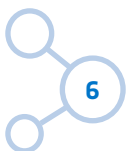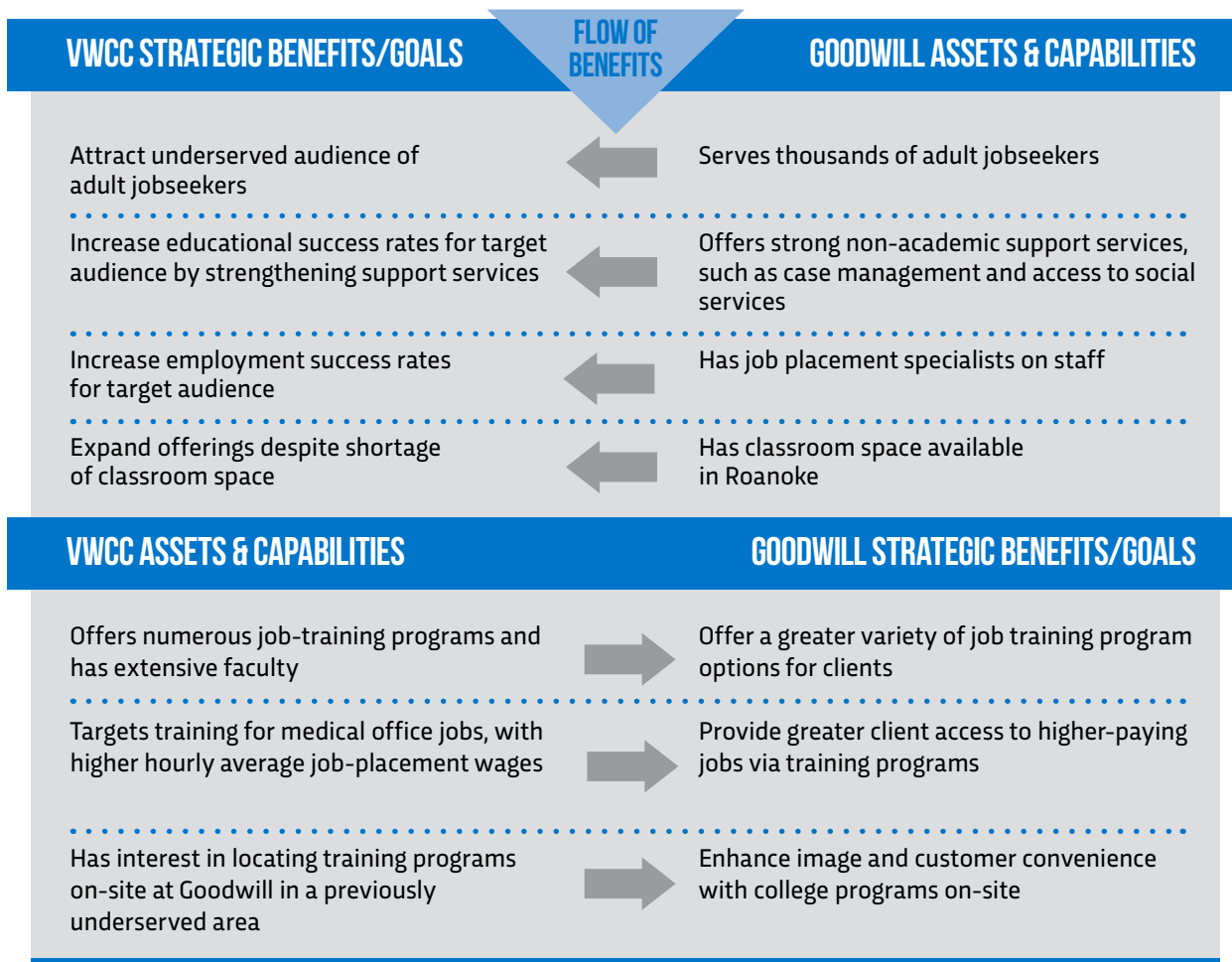
- **Co-locating staff:** When VWCC's program manager moved her office into Goodwill's site, she noted, Goodwill colleagues fully accepted her and quickly integrated her into Goodwill's culture and operations.

STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT BENEFITS FOR EACH ORGANIZATION MOTIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Leaders and program staff at both VWCC and Goodwill view the alliance as important to their individual organizational strategies, driven forward by benefits that accrue to each party, as well as to community stakeholders. The chart below depicts how the strategic benefits and goals of each partner match assets and capabilities of the other partner.

VWCC STRATEGIC BENEFITS/GOALS	FLOW OF BENEFITS	GOODWILL ASSETS & CAPABILITIES
Attract underserved audience of adult jobseekers	←	Serves thousands of adult jobseekers
Increase educational success rates for target audience by strengthening support services	←	Offers strong non-academic support services, such as case management and access to social services
Increase employment success rates for target audience	←	Has job placement specialists on staff
Expand offerings despite shortage of classroom space	←	Has classroom space available in Roanoke

VWCC ASSETS & CAPABILITIES		GOODWILL STRATEGIC BENEFITS/GOALS
Offers numerous job-training programs and has extensive faculty	→	Offer a greater variety of job training program options for clients
Targets training for medical office jobs, with higher hourly average job-placement wages	→	Provide greater client access to higher-paying jobs via training programs
Has interest in locating training programs on-site at Goodwill in a previously underserved area	→	Enhance image and customer convenience with college programs on-site

For VWCC, offering a joint program located at Goodwill helps to addresses two strategic goals:

- To provide greater access to underserved students; and
- To increase educational success rates by delivering enhanced support services to students. *Appendix B, "Partnership Roles in a Typical Cohort," provides examples of support services.*

The Goodwill classroom location also helps address the college's shortage of classroom space, especially for training programs that require significant amounts of space for specialized equipment.

For Goodwill, having the college on site operating a joint skills training program fills a gap in its traditional workforce services — which had focused on placing jobseekers directly into lower-skilled jobs, by enabling more participants to train for a greater variety of skilled and better-paying career-track jobs. Having "college" on site not only is more convenient to Goodwill's customers, but also enhances its image and services, and enables it to attract and serve new segments of jobseekers and employers.

Department Of Labor Grant Planning Era (Fall 2012 To September 2013)

TRANSLATING A PROPOSAL INTO A PROGRAM ON THE GROUND

While preparing the grant proposal with NOVA, VWCC administrators reviewed the Roanoke area's job growth in health care and chose to focus the new program on that field — specifically on fast-growing, entry-level administrative jobs that can serve as onramps into multiple career pathways, such as medical coding, health information technology, and other IT and health-care specialties. Conversations with Carilion Clinic, Roanoke's largest hospital network, confirmed a need for such positions. The particular program focus on Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) computer skills certification, combined with additional instructional modules on medical terminology and an introduction to medical coding, had succeeded in NOVA's partnership with the nonprofit Training Futures program. VWCC and Goodwill decided to adapt it to their context.

The proposed timeline for implementing the grant included nine months of planning before the first class started. This was a tight timeframe for the partners to build out the full curriculum, hire and orient program staff and faculty, outfit a classroom as a computer lab, recruit students, and plan for student support services. During the recruiting process for the initial cohort of students, the partners began to grapple with the need to identify sources of tuition funding for each participant, because the federal grant could not be used to provide direct tuition support. This challenge would further complicate recruiting for several cohorts.

The design of the MOS for Healthcare program that was developed during this period has evolved continuously in the past two years, based on reviews of documented results and feedback from participants, employers, and staff. The program targets unemployed adults who have been laid off and who lack basic office computer skills, as well as low-wage workers who want to prepare for better careers. As of the time of this publication, it runs Monday through Friday for 25 to 30 hours a week over 17 weeks, with two cohorts per year.

The program has several modules. Participants complete the initial two modules concurrently. The larger one focuses on computer literacy and Microsoft Office software to prepare them for the MOS certification; the other focuses on math skills. Later, participants complete several specialized health-care modules, such as medical terminology and introduction to medical coding. The course ends with job-readiness training to prepare participants for their job search. Following the coursework, trainees participate in internships or job-shadowing experiences with participating health-care employers. These are arranged by program staff. *For more information, see Appendix C, "Program Design, Microsoft Office Specialist with Healthcare Focus."*

BLENDING ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS INTO SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIP ROLES

As the partners prepared to deliver the MOS program, they faced many decisions on how to combine their assets to accomplish the day-to-day work. Both VWCC and Goodwill had traditional processes and cultural expectations for activities like outreach and marketing, enrollment, service delivery and data collection. They would have to change many of these to run an effective joint program. In some cases, urgent challenges compelled action. In others, the need to engage employers and other stakeholders more deeply created a ripple effect of changes. Moreover, a review of emerging data trends on outcomes also led the partners to implement changes and new activities.

Over time, the partnership program processes, activities, and delineation of roles have become more refined and detailed, guided by a "roles" worksheet that the college and Goodwill developed jointly. Appendix B shows which partner takes the lead in specific program activities for a typical cohort. For example, it was clear from the outset that VWCC would take the lead in developing curricula and delivering instruction, while Goodwill would host the program and provide nonacademic support services. Virginia Western takes the lead in curriculum design and instructional delivery, while Goodwill continues to manage the space and resources within its facility.

However, many program delivery processes involve the sharing of roles across both organizations. Thus, Goodwill and VWCC staff share the responsibility of conducting outreach and recruitment for the program, student support services, and employer engagement. *For a detailed roles chart, see Appendix B.*

PARTNER ROLES IN TRAINING PROGRAM COHORT PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES, SPRING 2015

Virginia Western Community College Leads:
- Cohort planning and scheduling
- Instructional delivery
- Training materials and equipment

Goodwill Leads:
- Facilities management
- WIA engagement and process management

Joint Process and Shared Accountability:
- Outreach and recruitment
- Candidate screening and enrollment
- Case management and support services
- Employer engagement
- Graduate services

Separate Processes:
- Data systems with information on participants and their education and employment outcomes
- Reporting data to funders

Operations Era (September 2013 to Spring 2015)

The federal grant provided significant program management resources for several years, an investment that has been essential to building the new program. The grant also required extensive external accountability and reporting during the critical early phase of the MOS program operations, which formally committed both partners to monitor program experiences and results carefully, including the participants' credential attainment and job placement. While the federal grant helped build important capacities, the program design, operational processes, roles, stakeholder relationships, and outcomes achieved evolved continuously during the first two years of operation.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Several unexpected challenges emerged during the operations phase and tested leaders on both sides of the partnership. Without a strong foundation of trust, such problems can pull partners apart, with each retreating to familiar organizational customs, or even descend into mutual finger-pointing and blame. Instead, leaders on both sides affirm that the VWCC-Goodwill partnership has been strengthened through a process characterized by open dialogue about challenges and mutual accountabilities in addressing them. Specific challenges and the partners' approach to addressing them are an unanticipated Internet connectivity problem and issues related to recruitment and tuition funding.

Internet Connectivity: Of the many changes required of the partners to run joint programs effectively, staff in both organizations report that one stood out as a turning point during the first cohort of the MOS program. Goodwill identified a dedicated classroom for the program's computer lab, and VWCC leveraged the grant funds to purchase 18 desktop computers to install there. When students began to log onto the Internet, it became clear that the facility could not handle all of the users simultaneously. VWCC and Goodwill IT staff worked together with the local cable company to identify an upgrade, which would cost $5,000, an expense that neither party had anticipated. When Goodwill's IT director briefed Phipps on the problem, the Goodwill CEO did not hesitate. He immediately authorized the expenditure as an organizational investment that was required for the success of the joint program.

Recruitment and Tuition Funding: The partnership encountered a number of challenges associated with recruiting for the first two cohorts. Each of the first two cohorts included only eight or nine students, far short of the grant commitment of fifteen for each cohort. With new programs, it typically takes awhile for recruitment to pick up, but enrollment numbers were still low after the third cohort.

Joint program staff decided to reevaluate their recruitment processes and identified two problems to be resolved. First, they realized that Goodwill alone could not do the recruitment, as originally envisioned. They decided that Goodwill staff and the college could build out a larger community referral network if staff from both organizations shared recruitment responsibilities.

Second, although the federal grant helps to cover programmatic costs, it cannot be used to cover tuition. Yet the program targets underprepared low-income adults, for whom the $1,500 tuition price tag can be prohibitive. To address this issue, joint program staff originally identified the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as a potential funding source because Goodwill, as a local, one-stop job center, administers WIA funds. However, when program managers tried to address low enrollment numbers using this route, they realized that the process for determining eligibility for WIA-qualified students took too long. As a result, potential participants in the MOS program were missing the program start date and being deferred to the next program cycle, and many never came back to enroll. With this information in hand, Goodwill leaders changed the process for determining WIA eligibility for those students interested in the MOS program. For Goodwill WIA case managers whose clients were interested and qualified, what had been two separate systems and processes — WIA enrollment processes and the MOS training program's enrollment processes — were essentially stitched together into a single, more streamlined process.

VWCC also initiated new efforts to seek other potential resources to provide tuition assistance for eligible training candidates, with a longer-term goal of reducing reliance on WIA funding for tuition. VWCC's MOS program manager and Goodwill's resource manager also teamed up to enact a more aggressive external recruitment strategy by reaching out to other community partners, seeking both WIA and MOS program referrals.

Following these changes, the partners created a process map listing each step in program delivery and defining which individual at which organization would have primary responsibility for each step. This systems integration paid off with the January 2015 cohort, which enrolled 16 participants, approximately twice as many as the previous cohorts, and which was judged to be the "best-prepared" group of participants yet. The search for new tuition funding sources also began to yield results with this cohort, with several students whose tuition was funded by non-WIA sources.

DEVELOPING EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

Working together to improve recruiting set the stage for improving employer engagement. "Had we not gotten through this conversation" to address the recruiting challenge, noted VWCC Workforce Coordinator Leah Coffman, "we would not have been able to bring the employers on board."

During the planning stage and the first cohorts for the MOS program, the partners focused their collective efforts on recruiting and enrolling qualified students, which lessened staff time for building employer relationships. In Spring 2014, with concerns based on modest employment outcomes for the first cohort, as well as a "gentle nudge" from consortium leader NOVA, VWCC and Goodwill began to devote more attention to employer relationships. Program managers had already begun to develop a relationship with the Friendship Retirement Community, a 700-employee nonprofit that offers assisted living, rehabilitation and nursing-home care options at its Roanoke campus. However, VWCC and Goodwill were struggling to establish an operational partnership with Carilion Clinic, a nonprofit health-care network of eight hospitals, many specialized clinics and 11,700 employees.

Led by VWCC's MOS program manager, the partners formed an employer advisory committee as a core component of their strategy to engage a number of employers more deeply in curriculum design and job-readiness training, as well as in providing jobs for program graduates. They recruited employer representatives for the committee from Friendship, Carilion and several other health-care enterprises. Initially, committee members reviewed one MOS program instructional module at each monthly meeting, with employers providing feedback designed to help shape the curriculum based on workplace competencies. As a result of these meetings, for example, the partners added a customer service module to the MOS program, augmented training in completing online job applications, and revised the medical terminology module.

With formal agendas, meeting summaries and email updates on follow-up action steps, employers on the committee saw quick results of their participation, which helped energize them. Several committee members volunteered to conduct mock job interviews, host internships, and participate in end-of-cohort job fairs. In a focus group for this case study, students cited employer participation in mock interviews as essential practice for the real thing. One student participant noted, "I learned why some of the previous interviews didn't go as well as I thought they did."

Developing internships and other work-based learning experiences has also been a major focus of the partnership's employer engagement strategies. Unpaid internships or job shadowing experiences are offered to most students after the MOS program. As noted by participants and program managers, internships, in particular, give participants an opportunity to build confidence in applying their new skills and strengthen their résumés to include a recent training-related work experience. At the same time, employers have a low-risk way to observe the capabilities of MOS program graduates before hiring them.

Program managers began approaching employers to offer internships beginning with the second cohort of students. Enthusiastic reports at meetings of the employer advisory committee on the success of MOS program interns at Friendship made an impression with other employers. They began making their own plans to host MOS program interns, although getting internships approved by health-care employers required a lengthy negotiation in several cases, addressing concerns such as background checks and patient confidentiality issues. As an alternative to longer internships that were harder to get approved, program managers also worked with employers on shorter job shadowing opportunities to give program participants an opportunity to view the work environment and learn from experienced workers.

In a focus group, several former MOS program participants articulated the value of an opportunity to do internships. One said, "If you don't use it, you lose it. Having an internship soon after completion of the program would reinforce what I learned in class."

BUILDING COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

It takes time and persistent effort to build the network of stakeholder relationships that underpin effective community-based and employer-driven training strategies. Program managers observed that both employers and the representatives of potential candidate referral agencies often prefer to observe the quality and results of a program before choosing to engage with it deeply.
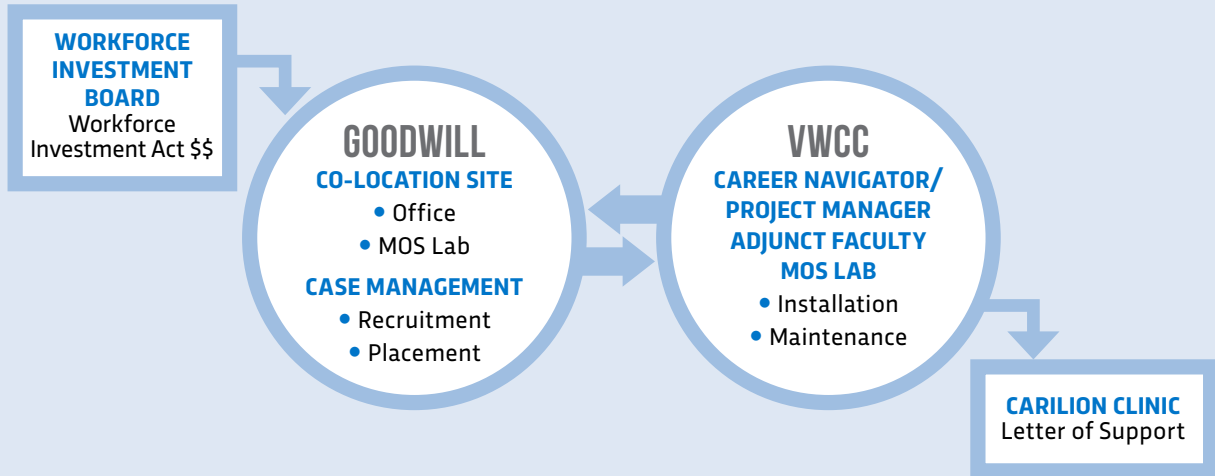
The two MOS program diagrams shown on the following page contrast stakeholder relationships in August 2013, when the first cohort was launched, to the network in March 2015, after the completion of the third cohort. They are based on stakeholder maps configured by VWCC Workforce Coordinator Leah Coffman for a workshop presentation in March 2015. Comparing the two diagrams, it is clear that the program has expanded its funding and participant referral partnerships (at the top of the maps) beyond the initial WIA funding and referrals to include participant referrals and potential funding through the Virginia Department of Social Services and a Virginia Community College System (VCCS) On-Ramp grant, a statewide initiative to re-train dislocated workers. Even more dramatic is the growth in the program's employer partnerships, mostly through the employer advisory committee.

In addition to the external stakeholders noted in the maps, Goodwill and the VWCC program staff have blended their processes together, represented in the diagrams by overlapping organizational circles. Both staffs also reported stronger internal stakeholder engagement in 2015 as compared to 2013. At the college, the grants office has been particularly active in developing new sources of financial support, the IT department has maintained the off-campus computer lab at Goodwill, the business studies department has provided academic guidance, and the admissions and student services departments have begun to refer student applicants.
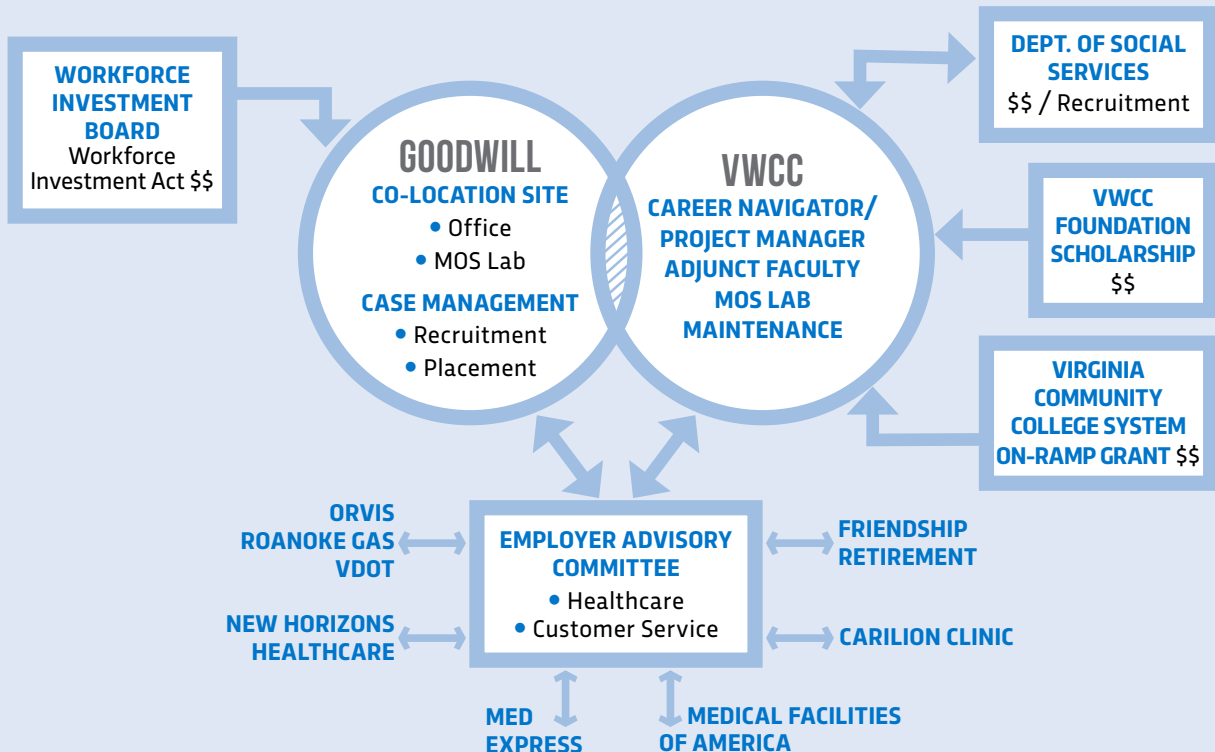
"All of these efforts continue to build a foundation of support that will allow the program to be sustainable in the long term," notes Coffman.

VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE MICROSOFT OFFICE SPECIALIST PROGRAM

STAKEHOLDER MAP AUGUST 2013: PROGRAM START-UP

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
Workforce Investment Act $$

GOODWILL
CO-LOCATION SITE
- Office
- MOS Lab

CASE MANAGEMENT
- Recruitment
- Placement

VWCC
CAREER NAVIGATOR/ PROJECT MANAGER
ADJUNCT FACULTY
MOS LAB
- Installation
- Maintenance

CARILION CLINIC
Letter of Support

STAKEHOLDER MAP EARLY 2015

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
Workforce Investment Act $$

GOODWILL
CO-LOCATION SITE
- Office
- MOS Lab

CASE MANAGEMENT
- Recruitment
- Placement

VWCC
CAREER NAVIGATOR/ PROJECT MANAGER
ADJUNCT FACULTY
MOS LAB
MAINTENANCE

DEPT. OF SOCIAL SERVICES
$$ / Recruitment

VWCC FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP
$$

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM ON-RAMP GRANT $$

ORVIS
ROANOKE GAS
VDOT

NEW HORIZONS HEALTHCARE

EMPLOYER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- Healthcare
- Customer Service

FRIENDSHIP RETIREMENT

CARILION CLINIC

MED EXPRESS

MEDICAL FACILITIES OF AMERICA

PROGRAM RESULTS

Enrollment, Education and Employment Results

With the short timeframe and modest number of students served, the limited data suggest viewing any trends as tentative findings. Given this caution, the program's first four cohorts have achieved strong completion rates, modest but fairly consistent educational results, and rising employment and wage outcomes. The fourth cohort attracted twice the number of enrollments as previous ones, reaching the 18-student capacity of the computer lab at Goodwill.

The outcomes data were derived from VWCC's participant database, which was developed for the federal grant to report specific required data. Goodwill also maintains a database of participant demographics and outcomes, and the Workforce Investment Board requires it to report specific data. Participants in the MOS program signed release forms, enabling the partners to share participant data needed for their separate data systems and reports.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

- As of May 2015, four cohorts of students had enrolled a total of 41 students. The first three cohorts enrolled eight, eight, and nine students, respectively, with 16 students in the fourth cohort.
- Participants complete the program by attending regularly and completing the coursework. Completion rates have been strong, with seven students (87.5 percent) completing the first cohort and 100 percent completing the second and third cohorts. Completion dipped for cohort four, with 11 of the 16 students completing their program of study (69 percent).

Program managers attribute the high completion rates to a rigorous four-step candidate screening and enrollment process to select the best-fit candidates (see Appendix C), building personal bonds of trust that enable participants to disclose difficulties, and ongoing and personalized support services that help participants address barriers and challenges. For example, even when three participants in the Fall 2014 cohort accepted early job offers and could no longer attend the daily classes, program staff and instructors communicated course assignments to them, and they completed the remaining coursework on their own during the final several weeks.

CERTIFICATION ATTAINMENT

- Students completing the program are eligible to take the exam to earn three MOS certifications. Across all four cohorts, completers earned between one and two certifications on average.

College staff, instructors, and some students described the modest rates of MOS certification attainment as somewhat of a disappointment. Instructors and students identified discrepancies between the MOS certification exam and the instructional materials and practice exams as one cause. To bridge this gap, the college's program managers and instructors are revising instruction and practice exams to align them more closely with the test.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE GAINS

- Many program completers began new jobs after completing the MOS program, beginning with 50 percent employment success in the first cohort and rising to 100 percent in the third cohort. In cohorts one and three, the new jobs often paid an average of $2.82 per hour and $3.17 per hour more than the students earned in previous jobs. In cohort two, the average wage gain was $0.49 per hour.

MOS Project Director Tara Alatorre attributed rising employment outcomes to several factors. She observed that as referral agencies became more familiar with the program and more confident in its success, they referred better-qualified candidates. Also, the employer engagement strategy resulted in increased employer participation as volunteer mock interviewers, guest speakers, and internship and job-shadowing providers. Alatorre suggested that by "putting participants in front of employers more," their increased comfort and confidence with employer interactions led to better job-search outcomes. In addition, the program team has provided additional guidance to participants about using staffing agencies as stepping stones to permanent positions, which may have contributed to several staffing agency hires in later cohorts.

See Appendix D, "MOS Program Enrollments and Core Outcomes," for more information.

Progress Toward Strategic Goals for VWCC and Goodwill

The partnership is still in its early stages and has served modest numbers of students to date, yet each of the partners has begun to chart results toward the strategic benefits their leaders have sought.

For Goodwill, its college partnership strategy paid off in Fall 2013 with the addition of two college skills training program options offered at its Roanoke site. In addition to the MOS program, Goodwill made space available for the college's industrial maintenance training, giving its clients two convenient new options at its facility. These options have been paying off for Goodwill's clients as well. In the six months ending January 2015, Goodwill reported that traditional job placement clients who had not completed training made $9.78 an hour in new jobs, while newly employed participants from VWCC training programs earned $13.97 an hour (43 percent more).

For Virginia Western Community College, the partnership has enabled the college to expand its workforce offerings despite a shortage of appropriate classroom facilities on campus. Even before moving the industrial maintenance training to Goodwill, the college was successful at training and placing participants in new, high-paying jobs, but the program was at risk of becoming homeless without dedicated space at the college for the specialized training equipment. "We would not have had this program at all without the partnership," observed VWCC's Leah Coffman.

The joint MOS program at Goodwill also achieved the college's goal of attracting students who differed from VWCC's typical student profile. The MOS program has enrolled a dramatically higher proportion of African-American, older, and first-generation students compared with the college overall. As a result of the partnership, unemployed and low-income adults who were unlikely to enroll in VWCC programs have new opportunities to train for better-paying careers. *For more information, see Appendix E, "VWCC and MOS Program Student Profiles."*

Benefits for Workers and Employers

While the pursuit of strategic goals got the partnership started, the realization of tangible, ongoing benefits for all stakeholders drives sustainability and further growth.

For **MOS program training participants,** the reported program benefits most often include:

- Transferable skills for a new career path;
- A quick labor market payoff (in the form of a new job in less than six months);
- Individualized support services to help address academic and non-academic barriers to success; and
- An intentional support community of peers.

For participating employers, the reported benefits most often include:

- Partnership goals that are aligned with the employers' goals;
- Opportunity to shape the program to address their talent needs; and
- Enhanced community image associated with involvement in a community-based program.

For more information, see Appendix F, "Stakeholder Benefits Described in Case Study Interviews."

Finances and Sustainability Planning

The federal grant provided critical capacity-building funding to develop and launch the MOS partnership program, but it did not come close to funding the program fully. Since 2013, when the grant covered non-recurring startup costs, such as computer equipment for the classroom, each of the partners has allocated over 90 percent of grant funds to personnel-related costs for the ongoing operation of the MOS program. Identifying new personnel funding resources to replace a large, time-limited grant is a significant and ongoing challenge for the partnership.

On the VWCC side, the federal grant covers a portion of the instructors' pay. All instructors for the MOS program are adjuncts, which effectively lowers the overall faculty costs to the college compared with costs for using full-time faculty. The grant has also funded the full salary of the college's MOS program manager, whose duties include recruiting students, providing student support services, managing the employer advisory committee, and managing and reporting program data. Based on the grant, the college's workforce development division reduced the per-participant tuition from $3,000 to $1,500. Tuition also covers the program's costs for materials and certification test fees. To date, the balance of the program tuition has been funded primarily through regional WIA training vouchers for approved program participants.

On the Goodwill side, the grant has funded a portion of the salaries for two student support specialists for the MOS program. A case/resource coordinator manager assists in recruiting and in providing ongoing case management for participants while in the program. A job developer assists program graduates with job searches and helps the program develop relationships with employers who need health-care administrative talent. To date, Goodwill's general operating budget has absorbed the full cost of the MOS classroom facility, related services, such as Internet connectivity, and other program management costs.

With the federal grant scheduled to end in March 2016, the partners are discussing sustainability plans, but have yet to identify a specific strategy. They agree that their joint goal is not to sustain just a "program" but rather an evolving partnership strategy that can jointly deliver a changing mix of programs depending on community needs. At Goodwill, Phipps noted, "There's no specific roadmap, but there is a strategic direction to continue building these college partnerships." He added that "renewed funding depends on a program's performance," and that individual programs may rise and fade over time, depending on area employers' needs for specific skilled talent.

VWCC President Sandel also cited the critical relationship between program performance and sustainability. He and the college's director of grants and special projects, Marilyn Herbert-Ashton, noted examples where the college matched high-performing programs with ongoing program funding from local government or foundations. "Jobs are the proof in the pudding," emphasized Sandel. "Living wages for families changes everything."

LESSONS FROM EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS

This case study describes the initial stages of building a new partnership between a community college and a nonprofit workforce organization, with lessons learned and guidance for others who are considering partnerships.

- **A community-focused strategy sets the stage for partnerships.** Both VWCC and Goodwill had outward-looking leaders in tune with community needs, and they purposefully aligned organizational success with community outcomes. President Sandel summarized this leadership approach: "You don't worry about who gets the credit; the real credit goes to those students who succeed." His Goodwill counterpart Phipps echoed this philosophy, saying, "Businesses are realizing we have people that can work for them. It elevates our organizations, but that is minor compared to the results that we see with students."

- **Building a foundation of trust and mutual accountability is essential for successful partnerships.** Executive, management, and service-delivery staff on both sides of the partnership spoke about the importance of trust in building and operating an effective partnership. Developing personal relationships and proving to each other the ability to deliver results helped to create a readiness to act together when the grant opportunity arose. As one site visit observer concluded after hearing partnership representatives discuss how mutual trust led to success, "When you have trust, everything is easier. When you don't have it, nothing is [easy]."

- **Clarifying and reporting organizational benefits help sustain and grow partnerships.** Because they knew one another, leaders at VWCC and Goodwill each envisioned specific strategic organizational capacities and goals that could be achieved more readily through a partnership. Through the partnership, VWCC can now reach and support low-income adult students more readily, rather than trying to build these capabilities internally. Similarly, Goodwill leveraged the college's brand and educational delivery assets to attract and serve different employers and provide higher-paying job opportunities for participants through new training programs. As each partner began reporting results toward meeting strategic organizational goals, initial success generated momentum toward sustaining successful programs, like the MOS program, and to start new joint programs, such as the industrial maintenance program.

- **Successful partnerships regularly adapt based on data and observations.** Having data-gathering and reporting requirements associated with an important grant helped ensure that program leaders would continually track data and use it to make adjustments as needed. Both partners openly shared data with one another and communicated constantly, as noted by VWCC's Leah Coffman: "One of the things that sets our partnership apart is an open-door communication process. We have the comfort level and are willing to pilot new things." Partly as a result of continuous data tracking and dialogue, combined with the resulting program enhancements, the MOS program charted rising enrollments and some increases in participant outcomes during its first two years.

- **Successful partnerships require both parties to change.** Several new processes resulted from the initial combining of organizational assets that leaders from both parties planned together. However, unanticipated events, crises and emerging data required creative responses that led to further changes. Mary Ann Gilmer, vice president for workforce development at Goodwill, reflected on the many partnership conversations that have deepened the understanding of one another. She said, "Now we speak each other's language more than we used to, and we understand one another's culture." A leader planning to enter a long-term operational alliance should be prepared to champion numerous changes in traditional processes that may also lead to an operating culture that can be remarkably different from the larger organizational culture.

- **Both partners shape and contribute to a "family-like" support culture for students.** From both organizations, program staff and faculty invested time and attention to building a culture of personal support, something that often is harder to achieve in traditional college programs. Numerous students commented on the supportive culture of the program as a key success factor, with comments like, "You connect with everybody, like a family," and, "When I said 'no' they said 'go.' They won't let me give up." One instructor described how this environment helped make her more effective, saying, "We talk about our lives over lunch. When you know what's going on in someone's life outside of class, it gives you insights into how you approach that person."

- **New partnership programs take time and sustained management attention to build.** Enormous management capital is needed to set up a partnership and build an employer- and community-responsive training program. In this case, those processes have taken more than two years. Executive sponsors of new programs (as well as funders) should be prepared to invest significant resources in a multiyear startup. Since programs typically start small, large investments may at first appear to be disproportionate to the size and scope of the new program, but they can build a foundation for more comprehensive partnership strategies.

- **Building Stakeholder Engagement Pays Big Dividends.** Program managers have painstakingly knitted together a web of stakeholders, including referral organizations, funding partners, and especially employer stakeholders. As the stakeholder representatives observed successful results, they became more willing to deepen their engagement. VWCC's MOS Project Director Tara Alatorre described a mutually reinforcing process of deepening stakeholder engagement and rising program results as a "self-generating process to sustain the program."

As many colleges and nonprofit workforce organizations within the national Courses to Employment movement have learned, there is a compelling case for acquiring new capabilities through partnerships, rather than building them separately. This case study illustrates many of dynamics of how prominent partner organizations weave their organizational assets jointly toward a shared vision of making a bigger difference within their community together than they could have apart.

Recommended Resources on Community College-Nonprofit Workforce Organizational Partnerships

ASPEN INSTITUTE RESOURCES

Courses to Employment website (www.coursestoemployment.org): This Aspen Institute website summarizes findings from a national survey of community colleges and nonprofit partnerships. It includes links to major C2E research publications, tools and other resources, including the two major resources highlighted below.

Partnering to Create Paths to Education and Careers: The Courses to Employment capstone research report, published in 2012, presents key findings from the C2E demonstration project.

Stories from the Courses to Employment Project: This 19-minute video features compelling stories from participants at two C2E partnership sites.

ACHIEVING THE DREAM RESOURCES

Effective Strategies for Engaging Faculty and Staff: PRESS for Completion: Community colleges are the pathways for millions of Americans to gain valuable education and access to career opportunities leading to family-sustaining wages. Faculty, student services staff and administrators must share in the responsibility for student success if the nation is to meet its completion goals and reach even more students. Fifteen Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges embarked on an ambitious strategy to broaden faculty and staff engagement. This document summarizes lessons the colleges learned through their faculty and staff engagement work. (http://achievingthedream.org/resources/13810/engaging-faculty-and-staff-in-the-student-success-agenda-case-studies-from-the-Walmart-foundation-press-for-completion-grant)

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: PARTNER ORGANIZATION PROFILES

VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	CHARACTERISTIC	GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF THE VALLEYS
■ Public two-year community college	Organization Type	■ 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
■ VWCC provides affordable, accessible, and quality educational opportunities and workforce training to meet individual, community, and global needs.	Mission Statement	■ Helping people and families in our community achieve a better life through work and independence.
■ Roanoke, Salem, and four surrounding counties	Service Area	■ 31 counties in western Virginia
■ Day, evening, weekend, and hybrid classes provided on a 70-acre campus in southwest Roanoke. ■ Classes also offered at several off-campus sites, including dual enrollment classrooms at area high schools.	Locations and Physical Assets	■ 27 Goodwill stores and offices in service territory; 5 are Goodwill-owned.
■ Two-year degree programs and college-credit certificates ■ Noncredit workforce training and certification programs ■ Hybrid and distance learning options ■ High school dual enrollment programs	Core Programs and Services	■ Work and training programs ■ Commercial services to businesses ■ Retail stores/donated goods
■ 12,800 annual credit enrollments; 2,130 noncredit enrollments	Participant Service Volume	■ 86,000 individuals served in 2014, including 3,662 placed in jobs throughout western Virginia.
■ $33.6 million	Annual Revenues	■ $52 million
■ 35% from state appropriations ■ 57% from tuition/fees ■ 6% from grants & gifts ■ 2% other sources	Revenue Sources	■ 70% from retail sales earnings ■ 19% from workforce development contracts/grants ■ 8.5% from commercial contracts
■ 92 full-time faculty ■ 266 adjunct faculty ■ 263 administrative and other staff (177 full-time; 86 part-time)	Organizational Staffing	■ 1,100 employees

APPENDIX B: PARTNERSHIP ROLES IN A TYPICAL COHORT, AS OF 2014

ACTIVITIES FOR A TYPICAL COHORT	VWCC-LED ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES	GOODWILL-LED ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES
Cohort Planning — VWCC Leads	■ Develop curriculum for program ■ Coordinate scheduling of cohort start dates	
Outreach to Identify Potential Students — Joint Process	■ Conduct community outreach beyond Goodwill network	■ Refer applicants to program
Candidate Screening and Enrollment Selection — Joint Process	■ Conduct joint interviews ■ Conduct joint enrollment decisions	■ Administer, score and document TABE and Career Readiness test scores and administer career assessment ■ Process qualified applicants for WIA-funded training vouchers ■ Conduct joint interviews ■ Conduct joint enrollment decisions
Training Facilities and Equipment — Goodwill Leads	■ Furnish classroom equipment such as computers ■ Provide IT support to maintain computer lab at Goodwill	■ Provide dedicated classroom facility, including Internet access
Instructional Delivery — VWCC Leads	■ Hire and supervise instructional faculty ■ Provide materials ■ Deliver all classroom instruction ■ Jointly build peer learning community ■ Facilitate VWCC campus tour at end of program ■ Recruit employer reps to conduct mock interviews and attend career fair event ■ Administer certification exams	■ Jointly build peer learning community
Student Support Services — Joint Process	■ Jointly provide case management support services ■ Monitor attendance and make follow-up calls ■ Provide VWCC college ID for participants ■ Jointly make referrals to social service agencies for specific support services	■ Jointly provide case management support services ■ Fund and provide bus passes, driving stipends, and child care funding as needed ■ Jointly make referrals to social service agencies for specific support services
Employer Engagement Activities — Joint Process	■ Manage employer advisory committee ■ Joint job development and job placement matching of employers and participants ■ Develop internship opportunities with employers	■ Joint job development and job placement matching of employers and participants ■ Facilitate funding of participant stipends for some qualifying internships
Graduate Services and/or Career Advancement Support — Joint Process	■ Provide advising for continued education	■ Make follow-up calls to program alumni after job placement
Data Management and Reporting — Each handles separately	■ Maintain participant database and handle outcomes reporting for grant	■ Maintain paper and electronic case files ■ Handle WIB reporting for WIA-enrolled recipients

APPENDIX C: PROGRAM DESIGN, MICROSOFT OFFICE SPECIALIST WITH HEALTHCARE FOCUS

Target Audiences: Unemployed adults who have been laid off and who lack basic office computer skills and low-wage workers who want to prepare for a better career; priority for veterans, dislocated workers (especially trade-impacted), and the unemployed and low-wage workers

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Targeted Jobs: Medical office associate, patient registration, medical receptionist

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Credential Opportunities: Career Readiness Certificate (acquired during the application process); Microsoft Office Specialist certifications in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

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Tuition: $1,500 (includes books and certification exam fees)

The federal grant underwrites approximately half of the total per-participant program cost of $3,000 by paying for materials and some of the instructional costs.

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Enrollment Requirements:
- Submit program-specific application forms
- Pass Career Readiness basic skills proficiency test at a minimum (bronze) level
- Complete a career interest inventory
- Complete a personal screening interview with a case manager

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Program Length: 17 weeks; 25–30 hours per week; 385 total instructional hours

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Instructional Timeframe: Based on 2014 program design

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Microsoft Office Specialist: 256 instructional hours (12 weeks)

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Basic Mathematics: 30 instructional hours (6 weeks)

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Customer Service (new in 2014): 20 instructional hours (1 week)

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Medical Terminology: 25 instructional hours (1 week)

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Introduction to Medical Coding: 24 instructional hours (1 week)

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Introduction to HIPAA Privacy Rules: 6 instructional hours (2 sessions)

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Job Readiness Skills: 27 instructional hours (1 week)

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Internship (optional, based on availability): Varies

APPENDIX D: MOS PROGRAM ENROLLMENTS AND CORE OUTCOMES, AS OF MAY 2015

	COHORT 1 September–December 2013	COHORT 2 January–April 2014	COHORT 3 July–November 2014	COHORT 4 January–May 2015	OVERALL
Enrollments	8	8	9	16	41
Completions (rate)	7 (87.5%)	8 (100%)	9 (100%)	11 (69%)	35 (85%)
Average MOS Certifications Earned (out of 3 possible)	1.7 (Average for completers only)	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.55 overall average
New Jobs	4 (50%)	5 (62.5%)	9 (100%)	Not available	Not Available
Average Wage for New Job	Not available	$9.40/hour	$12.73/hour	Not available	Not Available
Average Wage Gain over Prior Jobs	$2.82/hour	$0.49/hour	$3.17/hour	Not available	Not Available

Note: Several employment-related outcomes for cohort 4 were not yet available at the time of this publication.

APPENDIX E: VWCC AND MOS PROGRAM STUDENT PROFILES

	VWCC STUDENT PROFILE (2013–14)	MOS STUDENT PROFILE (4 cohorts, 2013–15)
Ethnicity	82% White 12% Black 3% Asian 2% Hispanic	59% White 39% Black 2% Hispanic
Average Age	28.8 years (non-dual enrollment students)	45.3 years
Gender	55% female 45% male	98% female 2% male
First-generation College Goers	21%	54%

APPENDIX F: STAKEHOLDER BENEFITS, AS DESCRIBED IN CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

VWCC Goals/Benefits

Address Shortage of Specialized Training Classrooms	"Our campus is filled up"—*President Sandel* "Need dedicated space with specific equipment"—*College program manager*
Provide College Access for New Audiences	"Brings a different set of students"—*President Sandel* "Not many of these people were knocking on the college's doors. But they are knocking on Goodwill's doors."—*College program manager* "Coming to campus is intimidating. By hosting the program at Goodwill, the intimidation factor goes away."—*College program manager* "Being at Goodwill makes the college more accessible to the community. People come to Goodwill to get a job, but won't go to campus. Now, they just have to walk down the hall."—*College program manager*
Deliver Support Services to Increase Success Rates	"Goodwill's casework is something the college doesn't get into much."—*President Sandel* "Access to funding [via Goodwill] for students" in college programs—*College program manager*

Goodwill Goals/Benefits

Boost Organizational Image with Key Stakeholders	"We wanted to change the perception of what people can get from Goodwill by hosting the college here."—*Goodwill CEO Phipps* "It gives us more credibility with some of the businesses in the area." —*Goodwill program manager* Having the college here combats "a stigma against our clients, that they are low skilled or low ability."—*Goodwill program manager*
Increase Skills Training Options into Better Career Paths	"We wanted to develop more skilled training options."—*Goodwill CEO Phipps* "A lot of our clients were taking part-time, minimum-wage jobs, and weren't accessing credentialing opportunities for better jobs."—*Goodwill program manager* "It enhances our ability to solidify a career ladder for our clients" —*Goodwill case manager*
Attract New Resources	"It's a plus for funding applications. Funders love to see the partnership and collaboration, that we're not duplicating services."—*Goodwill program manager*

Participant Benefits

Skills Training with Quick Labor Market Payoff	"I didn't have 18 months to go to school."—*Former participant* "Two things stand out on their résumés: their computer skills are up to date and they've proven that they're dedicated by going through several months of training."—*College faculty member*
Transferable Skills for New Careers	"When you go to a company, you learn their software program. I wanted to learn [computer] basics, nuts and bolts."—*Former participant* "You can get college credit for some of the courses."—*Former participant*
Individualized Support Services	"If we needed help, we got it."—*Former participant* "After looking for a job for one and a half years, they talked me down from being frustrated. They encouraged me."—*Former participant* "Case managers at Goodwill offer a support system for those who don't have that with family and friends."—*Goodwill program manager* "I work with youth who come from families where no one has gone to college. They call me about everything."—*Goodwill case manager*

Participant Benefits *(continued)*	
Intentional Support Community	"The community that students build in the classroom has done more for retention than anything. They support and push one another."—*Goodwill program manager*
	"The students are pretty stressed because most are older, long out of school, and some recently laid off. They are intimidated at first, but we put them at ease." —*College faculty member*
	"We have a lunch room at Goodwill and eat there every day [with the students]. We have bonded, talk about a lot of personal stuff, and they feel comfortable." —*College faculty member*
	"Most of my clients are older and never thought that they'd go to college the traditional way. They didn't feel that they belong. They come here to Goodwill as a safe space, and we get their mindset around college."—*Goodwill program manager*
	"They are in class with people like them, not with all 18-year-olds who think they know everything."—*College faculty member*

Employer Benefits	
Shape the Program to Address Talent Needs	"I like the way that I can participate in reviewing the program. We gave our input and made changes."—*Employer advisor*
Aligned Goals of Partnership and Employers	"They are intentional about who they send to us. They want it to be a good match." —*Employer partner*
Enhanced Community Image	"We wanted to get our name out there, whatever we can do to get business." —*Employer partner*

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