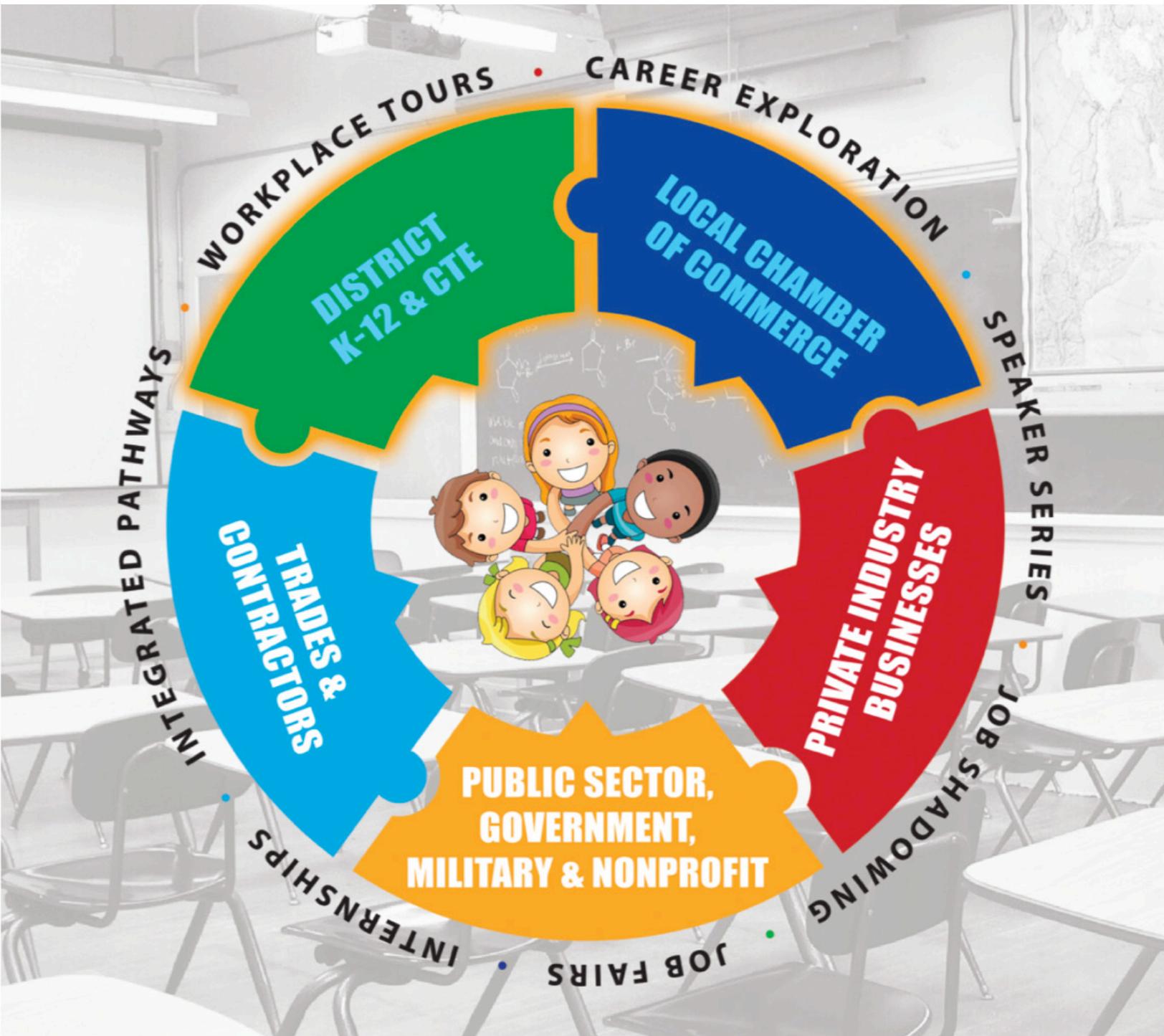


# CAREER READINESS WEST VIRGINIA



Comprehensive Summary  
Report 2019-2020

Prepared by  
**FORGE**

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# CAREER READINESS WEST VIRGINIA INITIATIVE: 2019-2020

The following report provides an overview of the Career Readiness West Virginia initiative during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. For this effort, **Forge** utilized data and from the U.S. Census Bureau, West Virginia's Bureau of Business and Economic Research: Economic Outlook 2020-2024 Report, WorkForce West Virginia, and FRED Economic Data. All references and resources are included in on page 11.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the participating county school districts, chambers of commerce, educators, and business leaders for their dedication to their community and support of Career Readiness West Virginia.

## PARTNERS & RECOMMENDED OUTCOMES

The **Career Readiness West Virginia (CRWV)** initiative is a collaborative partnership developing a sustainable future for the next generation of the West Virginia workforce. The initiative brings together public education and local chambers of commerce to partner with public and private sector employers, government, trades and contractors, and nonprofits to drive career and workforce development in local communities.

The **CRWV** initiative promotes and recommends the following educational and career exploration opportunities to engage West Virginia's students: Workplace Tours, Career Exploration, Speaker Series, Job Shadowing, Job Fairs, Internships, and Integrated Pathways. By implementing these recommendations, participating schools and local employers will expose elementary, middle, and high school students to a variety of occupations and employment opportunities appropriate for every level of education.



### PHASE 1

The first phase of the project was launched in Fayette, Hardy, Monongalia, and Wayne Counties in April 2019. For each county, **Forge** facilitated the initiative through a four-step process to achieve the goals and outcomes of **CRWV**. For the first step of the process **Forge** President and CEO Frank Vitale conducted leadership meetings with the local chamber of commerce executive, the county school superintendent, and the Career Technical Education senior representative. Based upon the goals of **CRWV** and the leadership team established at the leadership



meetings, the county school board and local chamber of commerce hosted stakeholder engagement meetings with chamber members, local educators, community and business leaders, local elected officials, and students.

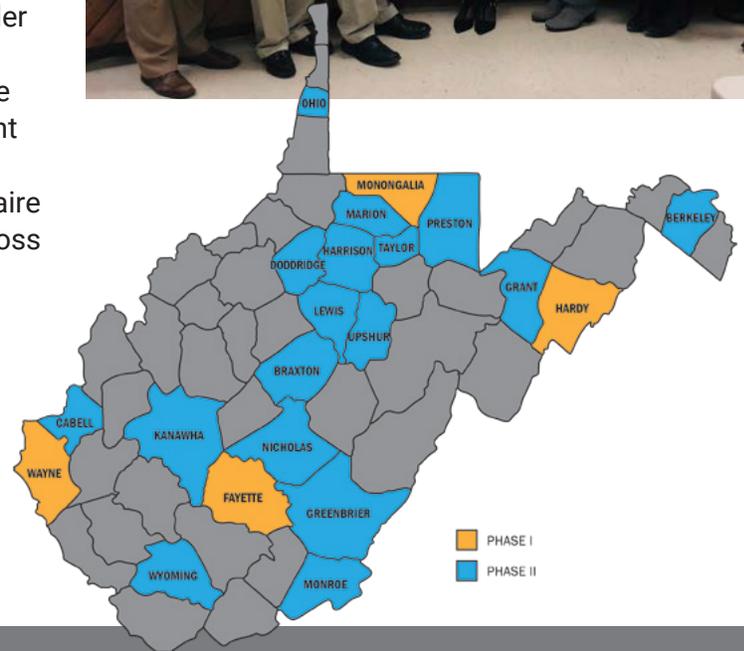
During the stakeholder engagement meeting, comments were collected from the Career Readiness and Workforce Development Questionnaire (Appendix A) to collect local industry input regarding regional career opportunities. Following each stakeholder meeting, the **Forge** team researched local, state, and national economies and workforce development trends to compose a summary report for each participating county. The summary report includes economic data, recommendations, and survey responses collected from each stakeholder meeting.



## PHASE 2

After a successful project launch, **CRWV** began its second phase in September 2019. Berkeley, Braxton, Grant, Greenbrier, Monroe, and Taylor Counties followed the same process as the first phase of the initiative. However, due to the circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Forge** team developed and executed a modified process to complete the project in Cabell, Doddridge, Harrison, Kanawha, Lewis, Marion, Nicholas, Ohio, Preston, Upshur, and Wyoming Counties. In lieu of the stakeholder engagement meetings, **Forge** collaborated with local school boards and chambers of commerce to distribute an online Career Readiness and Workforce Development Questionnaire (Appendix B) via SurveyMonkey to local business leaders and employers. The online questionnaire engaged over 150 business leaders and employers across the mountain state.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Career Readiness WV initiative conducted 32 meetings and composed 21 summary reports.



## CAREER READINESS WV REACH



21 out of 55 counties are involved in Career Readiness WV



53% of WV's student population: 138,751



54% of WV's population: 972,185



20,939 business establishments

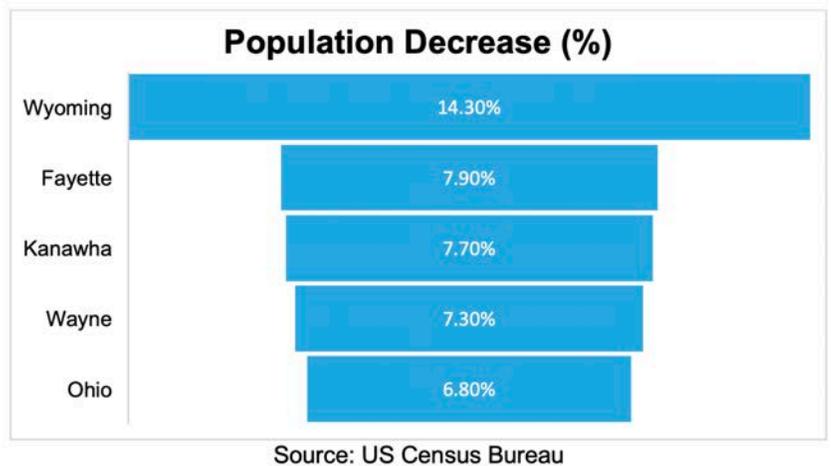


# RESEARCH FINDINGS

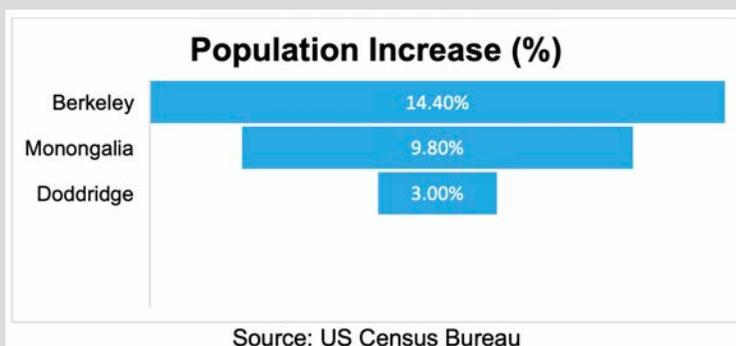
## WEST VIRGINIA OVERVIEW

### POPULATION

West Virginia's small population of 1,792,147 contributes to a strong sense of local community and pride. Despite that very real solidarity, many citizens face challenges that prompt them to move out of the state. Since 2010, West Virginia's population has decreased by 3.3% and is projected to continue decreasing over the next five years. West Virginia has one of the oldest populations and highest mortality rates in the country, heavily contributing to that declining population. In 2012, West Virginia's K-12 student enrollment was 282,309. Currently, the 2019-2020 student enrollment is reported at 261,633 – a 7.3% decrease in enrollment over the past eight years.



Out of the 21 counties involved in **CRWV**, the counties that experienced significant decreases in county population from 2010 to 2019 were Wyoming, Fayette, Kanawha, Wayne, and Ohio Counties.



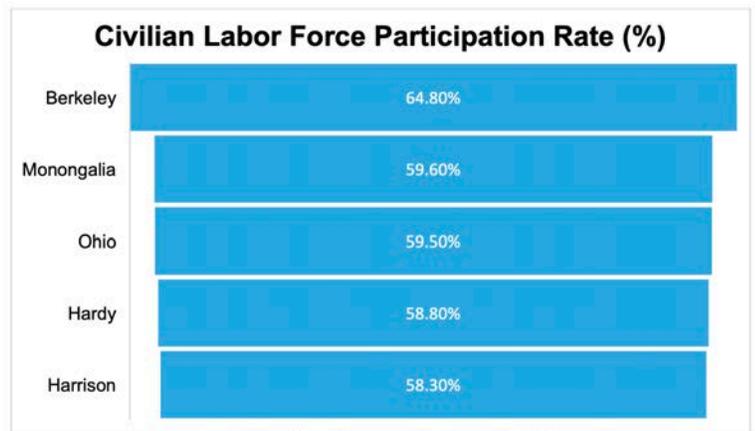
However, the state's Eastern Panhandle and other limited areas have experienced tremendous growth over the past decade due to positive net migration and natural population growth. Of the 21 counties involved in **CRWV**, Berkeley, Monongalia, and Doddridge Counties experienced an increase in county population from 2010 to 2019.



## LABOR PARTICIPATION

Low labor participation rates hinder potential economic prosperity in West Virginia. In 2018, the US Census Bureau reported 53.1% of West Virginia's adult population is working or looking for work, translating into the lowest labor force participation rate in the nation. The labor participation rate varies throughout the state; trending higher in the Eastern Panhandle, North Central, and Metro Valley regions, and lower in the rural areas.

The counties involved in **CRWV** with the highest civilian labor force participation rate are Berkeley, Monongalia, Ohio, Hardy, and Harrison Counties.



Source: US Census Bureau 2018

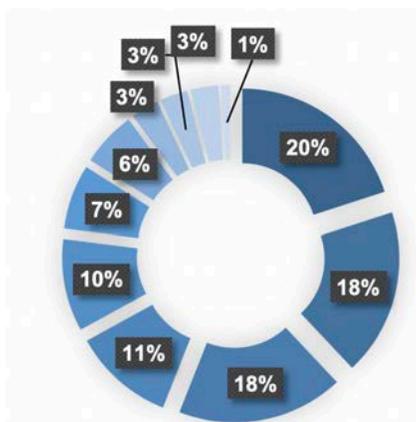
The ongoing opioid epidemic significantly affects the state's workforce participation rate. West Virginia leads the nation in drug-related deaths – nearly triple the national average. In 2017, 58 of 100,000 West Virginians died due to drug misuse. The prime workforce participation demographic is individuals ages 25-54; however, these individuals are also the most affected by the opioid epidemic.

Another factor that impacts labor force participation is inadequate educational outcomes. A lack of education, skills, and training leaves adults unable to secure a career. The North Central, Eastern Panhandle, and Metro Valley regions exhibit the highest rates of educational attainment in the state.

## LOCAL INDUSTRY

According to Data USA 2018 Report, the largest industries in West Virginia are General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, Specialty Hospitals (excluding psychiatric and substance abuse), Restaurants & Food Services, and Elementary & Secondary Schools. The most common jobs held by residents of West Virginia (by number of employees) are Driver/Sales Workers & Truck Drivers, Cashiers, and Elementary & Middle School Teachers. The highest paid jobs held by residents of West Virginia (by average salary) are Physicians, Nurse Anesthetists, Petroleum, Mining & Geological Engineers, and Mining Safety Engineers.

## WEST VIRGINIA EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION BY SECTOR



- Government
- Construction
- Trades, Transportation & Utilities
- Financial Activities
- Education & Health Services
- Natural Resources & Mining
- Leisure & Hospitality
- Other Services
- Professional & Business Services
- Information
- Manufacturing

2018 – Source: West Virginia Economic Outlook 2020-2024



**WEST VIRGINIA'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND EDUCATION ATTAINMENT  
COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.**

	<b>West Virginia</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
<b>Median Household Income 2014 -2018</b>	\$44,921	\$60,293
<b>Per Capita Income in Past 12 Months in 2018 Dollars 2014-2018</b>	\$25,479	\$32,621
<b>Average Civilian Labor Participation Rate 2014-2018</b>	53.1%	62.9%
<b>Average Unemployment Rate February 2020</b>	4.9%	3.5%
<b>High School Graduate or Greater Percent of Persons Ages 25+ 2014-2018</b>	86.5%	87.7%
<b>Bachelor's Degree or Higher Percent of Persons Ages 25+ 2014-2018</b>	20.3%	31.5%

*Source: US Census Bureau and FRED Economic Data*

**TOP TEN LARGEST PRIVATE COMPANIES IN WEST VIRGINIA**

<b>1</b>	WVU Medicine		<b>6</b>	Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.	
<b>2</b>	Wal-mart		<b>7</b>	Contura Energy	
<b>3</b>	Charleston Area Medical Center		<b>8</b>	Wheeling Hospital, Inc.	
<b>4</b>	Mountain Health Network Healthcare		<b>9</b>	Mylan Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	
<b>5</b>	Kroger		<b>10</b>	Murray American Energy, Inc.	

				
Healthcare	Retail	Grocery	Metals & Mining	Pharmaceutical

*March 2019 - Source: WorkForce West Virginia*



# CAREER READINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRES

**Forge** collaborated with county school districts and chambers of commerce to engage local stakeholders, business owners, educators, and community leaders throughout the state. The following subsections include highlights from survey questions and summarizes the responses from the two Career Readiness and Workforce Development Questionnaires. **The responses may contain opinions that do not represent the research or thoughts of Forge.**

## Local Industry Opportunities (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic)

- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Tourism
- Construction
- Skilled Trades
- Energy
- Mental Health
- Senior Care
- Aviation
- Engineering
- Entrepreneurship

Due to COVID-19, we can no longer provide hands-on educational training experiences for students in programs such as welding and aviation.

Closure of all revenue sources, fear in the community, financial issues, lack of clear and concise guidelines to assist us in planning.

Too many unknowns and moving target dates have made this very difficult to manage properly.

Ineffective operation due to staggered starts and distancing.

Loss of advertising dollars.

Increased demand for senior nutrition and in-home care.

70% loss of patient load/clientele in one month.

Reduction of workforce hours to about 50% to accommodate lack of business.

Inefficiencies in operation due to staggered starts and distancing.

Demand for Distance Learning Techniques.

Impacted healthcare due to elective procedure restrictions.

Clients are reluctant to move forward in securing contracts due to workforce risk and vulnerability.



## Top Characteristics Employers Seek in Potential Employees

- Team Oriented
- Reliable
- Accountable
- Motivated
- Drug Free
- Honesty
- Driver's License
- Organizational Skills
- Self-Starter
- Strong Communication Skills
- Willingness to Learn
- Professionalism
- Hard Working

## LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES (PRE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

### NEW HORIZONS

New Horizons Industries, a nonprofit located in Grafton, WV, offers employment opportunities for persons with disabilities through the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

### PACE ENTERPRISES

PACE Enterprises, a licensed Community Rehabilitation Program and Behavioral Mental Health Center, helps persons with disabilities join the local workforce.

### PROJECT SEARCH

Project Search, an international program, partnered with WVU Medicine to provide internship experiences and job opportunities for persons with disabilities.

### JOB SQUAD, INC.

Job Squad, Inc., a nonprofit and member of the West Virginia Association for Disability Employment, provides vocational skills development and other employment services for individuals who experience limitations for employment.

### STEPPING STONES

SteppingStones, a nonprofit organization that provides personal development programs and activities for children and adults with disabilities.

### PRESTON COUNTY WORKSHOP

The Preston County Workshop, an integrated rehabilitation facility, that works with the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services to match individuals with job opportunities and provides their employees with career training, preparation, and support.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE SERVING IN THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES (PRE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

- Give the assistance that our students need (i.e., help navigate admissions, leverage benefits, manage the impact of deployments and more).
- Businesses accommodate their training and service leave.
- Holding a Military Relocation Professional (MRP) certification, in order to offer elevated customer service to military members who are buying or selling real estate.
- Partner with local agencies to actively recruit potential candidates.
- Partner with VA services that aid job assistance to the armed services.
- VA - Transition to Workplace
- ROTC and JROTC
- Jobs and HopeJobs and Hope

## ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATION AND/OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PRE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

- Communities in Schools (CIS)
- DOE Simulated Work Program
- "See Me Lead" High School Program
- West Virginia Family Engagement Center Program
- Set up pathways and internships for students.
- "Get a Life" Program
- WVPEC annual Legislator's Forum for Education and the Economy
- Creating a workforce development committee.
- Partnering with schools- clinical education experience.
- Getting out in the community to network and explore needs for program growth and expansion.
- Leadership Berkeley
- Partnering with Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, and West Virginia National Guard.
- Assist with job applications and online job search.
- Writing grants for community training.
- Youth Apprenticeship Program
- West Virginia Manufacturing Association - What's Cool About Manufacturing?
- Serve on Economic Development Boards
- Collaboration with Education Alliance, Businesses, and Schools for cooperative agreements with FSU nursing and WVU PT and OT for practicum training opportunities.

## BARRIERS/CONCERNS FOR COLLABORATION WITH EDUCATION

### Pre COVID-19 Pandemic

- Pre COVID-19 Pandemic Establishing points of contact with education.
- Education tends to develop programs and initiatives without input.
- Financial education is lacking in high school education.
- Not necessarily a concern with collaborating with education, but with the educator's ability to be extended any further.
- Need shift to education towards trades.
- We need more events that bring together all levels of the community.
- Education bureaucracy sometimes is a hindrance.
- Discord with local leaders. Facilitating communication and collaboration amongst business sectors.
- Different views/values of the trade industry (kids working with their hands). Promote more technical classes to engage or get students excited about coming to school and wanting to learn.
- There isn't a program to help with creating a more skilled manufacturing pool of candidates.
- We need to be better informed of opportunities to engage.

### Post COVID-19 Pandemic

- Lack of communication from education with workforce partners.
- State and federal regulations
- Addressing preconceived ideas and unwillingness to change current practices.
- Preference to individuals of returning to work. Help to facilitate businesses in keeping as many jobs as possible.
- The technology isn't available to every home.



# WHY CAREER READINESS WEST VIRGINIA?



Approximately 30 million jobs in the United States that pay an average of \$55,000 per year do not require a bachelor's degree.



Individuals with career and technical certifications are more likely to be employed and working in their fields of study than their counterparts with academic credentials.



62% of firms are struggling to fill skilled trade positions.

Developing relationships between education and industry will catalyze growth and development for West Virginia's workforce. It is imperative for educators to acquire a deeper knowledge of career and industry opportunities to prepare students for the local job market. As new businesses and industries emerge, they will need to be supported with a unique and diversified labor force.

Future economic development strategies must include a focus on improving health outcomes, lowering drug abuse, and advancing education and vocational training opportunities in the state to make West Virginia's workforce appealing to current and potential businesses. Understanding the current state of West Virginia's economy is crucial to developing a plan for an improved future for West Virginia students.

By assessing local opportunities and existing partnerships, the **CRWV** initiative provides guidance and recommendations to county school districts to develop relationships between education and industry. Thus far, twenty-one counties across West Virginia have participated in **CRWV**, determined to pave a successful pathway for students through career exploration and equip the next generation of the West Virginia workforce.

**Forge Business Solutions, LLC**, is a consulting and professional strategy company headquartered in Morgantown, WV. Forge focuses on strategic planning and execution designed to help organizations and businesses find success, growth, and partnership. With particular expertise in education, healthcare, and government services, Forge uses its knowledge and experience to improve enterprises of all sizes and sectors. Whether you need a high-level strategic plan or a round of management training, Forge exists to serve your organization.

For more information, please contact Frank Vitale, President and CEO of Forge, at [fvitale@forgebz.com](mailto:fvitale@forgebz.com) or 304-777-2248.



# REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Career Readiness WV Website  
<http://careerreadinesswv.com/>

United States Census Bureau  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/WV>

West Virginia Economic Outlook: 2020-2024  
[https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/bureau\\_be/311/](https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/bureau_be/311/)

Bureau of Business and Economic Research  
[https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/bureau\\_be/](https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/bureau_be/)

WorkForce West Virginia  
<https://workforcewv.org/>

Data USA: West Virginia  
<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/west-virginia>

The Good Jobs Project  
<https://goodjobsdata.org/>

National Center for Education Statistics  
[https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/figures/fig\\_2016107-2.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/figures/fig_2016107-2.asp)

Adecco  
<https://www.adeccousa.com/employers/resources/skilled-trades-in-demand/>

FRED Economic Data  
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>

The Preston County Workshop  
<http://www.pcsworkshop.com>

SteppingStones  
<http://www.steppingstoneswv.org/index.html>

PACE Enterprises, Inc.  
<https://paceenterprises.org/>

New Horizons Industries  
<https://www.newhorizonsindustries.com/>

Project SEARCH  
<https://projectsearch.us/who-we-are/>

Job Squad  
<http://www.jobsquadinc.org/about-us>

myStrategic Compass  
<https://www.winlearning.com/mystrategic-compass>

WV Division of Labor  
<https://labor.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

West Virginia Department of Education  
<https://wvde.us/>

Career Technical Education – WVDE  
<https://wvde.us/technical-education/>

West Virginia Development Office  
<https://westvirginia.gov/>

WV Adult Education  
<https://wvde.state.wv.us/abe/>

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# APPENDIX A

## CAREER READINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. List the industry trends in your region...

Growth

Decline

Opportunities

2. What are the current opportunities in the local job market for those with a...?

4-year degree or greater:

2-year degree:

Technical Certification:

High School Diploma or GED:

3. What are the top 3 to 5 characteristics and skills your organization is looking for in an employee?

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4. What career opportunities are available in the local job market for persons with disabilities?

---

a. Are there active local education and/or career programs for persons with disabilities? If applicable, please list below.

b. What efforts have you/your organization taken to support persons with disabilities?



5. What career opportunities are available in the local job market for those serving in the National Guard and Reserves?

---

c. Are there active local education and/or career programs for those serving in the National Guard and Reserves? If applicable, please list below.

d. What efforts have you/your organization taken to support for those serving in the National Guard and Reserves?

6. How is your organization currently engaging with public education and/or public and private industry for the purpose of workforce and economic development?

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e. How are you/your organization engaged in local economic development?

7. What concerns do you have about collaborating with education? What barriers can you identify and how can we overcome those?

---



# APPENDIX B

## CAREER READINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (MODIFIED ONLINE VERSION)

**First Page/Disclaimer:** Thank you for participating in the Career Readiness West Virginia online survey.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help our team develop insight into local career opportunities and workforce development trends.

Your survey answers will be sent to a link at SurveyMonkey.com where data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Therefore, your responses are only accessible to members of the research team. Your information will be kept private and provided responses utilized in the research findings will remain anonymous.

Should you have any questions regarding the Career Readiness West Virginia initiative or the following survey, please contact [info@forgebz.com](mailto:info@forgebz.com) or visit: <http://careerreadinesswv.com/>

Please check all that apply:

- I have read the information above.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in the survey.
- I am 18 years of age or older.

Background Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Location (County/State): \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the primary county or counties your organization's employees reside:

- Cabell
  - Doddridge
  - Harrison
  - Kanawha
  - Lewis
  - Marion
- Nicholas
  - Preston
  - Upshur
  - Wyoming
  - Other (please specify)



1. List the local industry trends in your region (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic). Please list three industries per section.

Growth

Decline

Opportunities

2. What local industries have been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Please list at least two industries that have been negatively impacted:

Please list at least two industries that have been positively impacted:

Please list at least two industries that have not been affected by the pandemic:

How has your organization been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic?

3. Based on education attainment, what are the opportunities in the local job market (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic)? Please list three answers per section.

4-year degree or Greater 2-year degree:

High School Diploma or GED:

Technical Certification:

High School Diploma or GED:

4. What are the top 3 characteristics/skills your organization is looking for in an employee?

5. What career opportunities are available in the local job market for persons with disabilities (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic)?

Are there active local education and/or career programs for persons with disabilities?

What efforts have you/your organization taken to support persons with disabilities?

6. What career opportunities are available in the local job market for those serving in the National Guard and Reserves (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic)?

Are there active local education and/or career programs for those serving in the National Guard and Reserves?

What efforts have you/your organization taken to support for those serving in the National Guard and Reserves?

7. How is your organization engaging with public education and/or public and private industry for the purpose of workforce and economic development (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic)?

8. How are you/your organization engaged in local economic development (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic)?

9. What concerns do you have about collaborating with education? What barriers can you identify and how can we overcome those? (Pre COVID-19 Pandemic):

What concerns do you have about collaborating with education? What barriers can you identify and how can we overcome those? (Post COVID-19 Pandemic):

Additional comments regarding career readiness and workforce development in your community:

