

FY24 Competitive Education Staff Summaries & Recommendations

The Commission received 12 applications by the July 28, 2023 deadline for the FY24 Competitive Education program, one of which was withdrawn and will not be considered at this time. The applications are grouped below by focus area. The Education Committee will act on these applications at its meeting scheduled for October 11, 2023, at 2:45 p.m.

Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training				
Req #	Organization	Project Title	Request Amount	Staff Recommendation
4176	Central Virginia Community College Educational Foundation	CVCC Advanced Manufacturing with Energy Technology Expansion	\$220,878	\$220,878
4178	Central Virginia Planning District Commission	ACA Classical & CTE Institute Welding Program	\$318,255	\$318,255
Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training Subtotal (2 requests):			\$ 539,133	\$ 539,133
High School Equivalency Program				
Req #	Organization	Project Title	Request Amount	Staff Recommendation
4169	Washington County Public School System Db a Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program	Southwest Virginia RACE to GED/NEDP Program	\$140,000	\$140,000
Workforce Training Programs Subtotal (1 request):			\$ 140,000	\$ 140,000
Post-Secondary Programs with a focus in STEM-H				
Req #	Organization	Project Title	Request Amount	Staff Recommendation
4171	Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation	Healthcare Training Expansion	\$149,140	\$149,140
4170	Southwest Virginia Community College	SWCC's EquipEMT: Strengthening Emergency Medical Training through Advanced Equipment	\$71,206	\$71,206
4177	Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation	Southwest Virginia Regional Simulation Lab for Nursing and Allied Health	\$600,000	\$600,000
Post-Secondary Programs with a focus in STEM-H (3 requests)			\$ 820,346	\$ 820,346

Workforce Training Programs				
Req #	Organization	Project Title	Request Amount	Staff Recommendation
4179	Danville Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.	Danville Community College's Class-B Commercial Driver's License Non-Credit Workforce Program	\$291,000	\$233,081
4180	Ferrum College	Ferrum College Career and Technical Education Pathways	\$750,000	WITHDRAWN
4175	Mountain Empire Community College	Heavy Equipment Operator Program	\$92,705	\$92,705
4172	Southside Virginia Community College Foundation	Accelerating Truck Driver Training at SVCC	\$316,000	\$316,000
4173	Virginia Highlands Community College Educational Foundation	VHCC Diesel Technology Expansion	\$202,300	\$202,300
4174	Wytheville Community College	Wytheville Community College WEST – Workforce, Education, & Skills Training Center	\$277,000	\$277,000
Workforce Training Programs Sub-Total (6 requests):			\$1,929,005	\$1,121,086
TOTAL (12 requests)			\$3,428,484	\$2,620,565

Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training

Central Virginia Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.
CVCC Advanced Manufacturing with Energy Technology Expansion (#4176)
\$220,877.86 Requested

Project Summary: CVCC is recognized as the leading workforce trainer throughout the Central Virginia region and is committed to providing training that meets current workforce demand, accommodating student needs for both traditionally and non-traditionally timed instruction, and providing instruction on state-of-the-art equipment that meets evolving workforce standards. To satisfy this commitment, CVCC requests funds to purchase and install equipment for our Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training programs that will: 1) expand program capacity to meet growing enrollment in response to increased employer needs in high-demand fields; and 2) advance training of CVCC’s Advanced Manufacturing students on state-of-the-art equipment that accurately simulates their future work environment so they can complete their program job-ready and gain experience that will transfer to the industries in the region that they will serve upon completion.

Matching Funds:

- \$234,463.26 private company and private foundation funding

Project Outputs:

Total students completing credentials annually is anticipated to increase by 45, from 60 to 105:

- Mechatronics Associates – increase by 5 annually, from 20 to 25
- Machine Tools CSC – increase by 10 annually, from 28 to 38
- Nuclear Technology Associates, increase by 5 annually, from 3 to 8
- Industrial Maintenance CSC – increase by 23 annually, from 1 to 24
- Computer and Electronics Technology Associates – increase by 2 annually, from 8 to 10

Staff Comments:

Grant funds are requested to expand CVCC’s Mechatronics and Machine Tools Program supporting equipment purchases for advanced manufacturing workforce programs. This project supports the Lynchburg region’s manufacturing sector including companies that are part of a nuclear energy hub. The training programs will simulate the work environment and allow for an expansion in class size. An itemized equipment list, a strong explanation of the need for the requested equipment and cost estimates were provided. Education outcomes project at least 10% more students enrolled annually. A letter from the Central Virginia Workforce Development Board identified a regional demand for 1,480 production workers with 396 openings specific to metal fabrication. A sample list of five employers with active job listings identified a current need for 376 production workers. A list of high demand occupations specifically for the nuclear energy hub was included and shows entry level salaries ranging from \$50,900 to \$80,500. Employer letters supporting the project were from Deltra Stra, BWXT, Framatone, American Hofmann Corporation, and AMB, Inc.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project indicates that it is a sound investment. The project budget is detailed, reasonable and backed up with current quotes for requested equipment. Half of the necessary matching funds have been committed at the time of the application, and the rest is sought through an application to a private foundation. The applicant has sufficient capacity to deliver the project to fruition, and a marketing plan outlines development of a pipeline of students into training for these high-demand, well-paying positions. It is staff’s conclusion that the project is viable as presented.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$220,877.86 grant award.

Central Virginia Planning District Commission

ACA Classical & CTE Institute Welding Program (#4178)

\$318,255.00 Requested

Project Summary: Appomattox County Government, Appomattox Christian Academy (ACA), and Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) are partnering to create the ACA Classical & CTE Academy. The partners are renovating, upfitting, and equipping the historic Carver-Price School in the town of Appomattox to include educational opportunities never before available in the county. Coming online for the 2023-2024 academic year, Phase 1 will include welding, emergency medical technician training, and performing arts. The County is providing the building. ACA is renovating and upfitting the space as well as

operating classical education programming. CVCC will expand its footprint in Appomattox to operate career and technical education for dual-enrollment students, adult certificate candidates, and workforce training participants alike. The Institute will house 22 welding booths and fabrication space that will simulate real-world working environments. The welding program will better prepare its graduates for employment with manufacturers and producers vital to the economy of Central Virginia.

Matching Funds:

- \$15,077 approved by Appomattox County EDA
- \$17,800 approved by Dominion Energy
- \$214,200 commitment by Central Virginia Community College
- \$400,663.50 contribution from Appomattox Christian Academy
- \$500,000 application to Go Virginia Region 2
- \$16,945 in-kind contribution for donated materials and labor

Project Outputs:

Welding enrollment is projected to increase by 39 students annually, from a baseline of 143 to 182 total students enrolled annually. An additional 40 certifications/credentials are projected:

- Welding Plus CSC – increase of 5 annually, from 7 to 11
- Welding Fundamentals CSC – increase of 25 annually, from 44 to 70
- Welding Technology Certificate – increase of 10 annually, from 18 to 28

Staff Comments:

The Central Virginia PDC provides a strong application supporting the welding sector, one of the Lynchburg region's most important base industries. This request supports the Appomattox Christian Academy's ACA Classical and CTE Institute plans for establishing a 22-booth welding and fabrication space. The location is in the historic Carver Price school in the Town of Appomattox. The plans for this new training facility have developed from a strong partnership between Appomattox Christian Academy, Appomattox County, and Central Virginia Community College who are committed to the success of the CTE Institute. CVSS will operate the career and technical education programs providing expanded opportunities for adult workforce certifications and dual enrollment to high school students. Grant funding would be used for equipping costs for welding training space, and for an additional six welding booths. Seven private sector employer letters were submitted, along with other letters of support from organizations in the region.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project indicates it is a well-designed, highly achievable endeavor with strong support and involvement from the community. The project budget is detailed, reasonable and backed up with current quotes for requested equipment. The project has more than the minimum required match funding committed at the time of the application, and additional funds needed to support necessary capacity are sought through an application to Go Virginia. It is staff's conclusion that the project shows great promise and provides very good benefit for the cost.

***Staff Recommendation:* Staff recommends approval of a \$318,255 grant award.**

High School Equivalency Program

Washington County Public School System Dba Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program

Southwest Virginia RACE to GED/NEDP Program (#4169)

\$140,000.00 Requested

Project Summary: Commission funds are requested to provide financial assistance for high school equivalency testing in 16 Southwest region localities for a three-year period. There are currently two high school equivalency paths for adults, the GED and the National External Diploma Program (NEDP), both of which are included in the scope of this application. For those seeking a GED, TRRC funds will cover the cost of both on-demand practice testing and the GED test. Students on the NEDP track will receive tuition assistance. Commission funds will also cover the cost of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) as well as NCRC Program site license fees. Support for marketing the program is also included in the application's budget.

Matching Funds:

Matching funds will be requested from the three regional adult education programs served by this project (Wise County Public Schools – Race 1 (\$46,666.62), Russell County Public Schools – SW Regional Adult Education (\$46,933.32), and Washington County Public Schools – Mount Rogers Adult Education (\$46,800). These contributions reflect federal funds used to pay part time instructors who work with students in the testing pipeline.

Project Outputs:

- Annual enrollment across the three adult education regions will increase by 40 (120 over the three-year grant period)
- The following credentials will be awarded each year:
 - GED - 110
 - NEDP - 2
 - NCRC - 160

Staff Comments:

The Commission has a long history of supporting this regional partnership of three adult education programs serving 16 localities in SWVA. Since 2004, ten TRRC awards totaling over \$1.3 million, have assisted thousands of residents obtain high school equivalency diplomas. The program is an important tool used by the regional adult education network to recruit potential students into the pipeline and through to a successful GED or NEPD test. The application notes that 71% of those aged 24-64 years without a high school diploma are not participating in the labor force. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and other factors, participation has declined in recent years. The last Commission grant ended in May 2022 and, for the first time in nearly two decades, financial assistance was not available. The current application seeks to reestablish this important resource and to increase the number of students participating in the program. For the first time, TRRC funds have been requested for marketing support which was previously covered by matching funds. Although Staff recognizes the need for a robust marketing plan to inform residents of the availability of services, there are questions about the effectiveness of elements of the plan (yard signs, banners, posters, etc.). The plan is similar to the one presented for a similar project underway in Southern Virginia. If marketing support will be included in future applications, it is important that the plan be

evaluated to determine its effectiveness. As a condition of this award, the grantee will be required to track the referral source of each participant and include this information with final reporting at the end of the grant period.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project reveals a proven model by an applicant with a strong track record of project implementation. The budget is detailed, reasonable and provides for sufficient capacity to carry out the project. The financial viability of the project hinges on the approval of sufficient match funding, which was not committed at the time of application. Therefore, the placement of a contingency on approval of matching funds is recommended.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends a grant award of \$140,000 contingent upon the following: 1) verification that all matching funds are approved and available, and 2) the grantee will track the referral source for each participant and report the information at the end of the project to evaluate effectiveness of marketing methods.

Post-Secondary Programs with a focus in STEM-H

**Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation
Healthcare Training Expansion (#4171)
\$149,140.00 Requested**

Executive Summary: P&HCC is seeking assistance with expanding healthcare training capacity including Nurse Aide, Clinical Medical Assistant, Medication Aide, and Phlebotomy Technician training. These programs lead to short term credentials that quickly allow students to enter health careers in high demand in the region. The need for expansion is twofold. First, P&HCC’s Nurse Aide instruction is at capacity with a growing list of interested students. To expand the number of classes offered, P&HCC requires an additional instructor. Second, The Franklin Center has a growing waitlist of students interested in pursuing Nurse Aide and other healthcare training and will partner with P&HCC to offer courses on site in Franklin County. If an additional instructor is hired, P&HCC will be able to expand training for these high-demand healthcare offerings both in number of students served and in the service locations offered.

Matching Funds:

- \$130,909 state funding provided by Patrick & Henry Community College
- \$20,000 in-kind from The Franklin Center for use of training laboratory and office space.

Project Outputs:

- Nurse Aide Certification- increase of 29 credentials annually, from 36 to 65
- Certified Clinical Medical Assistant- increase of 15 credentials, from 70 to 85
- Certified Medication Aide- increase of 21 credentials, from 0 to 21
- Certified Phlebotomy Technician- increase of 17 credentials, from 28 to 45

Staff Comments:

This project expands on a successful Nurse Aide program that the Commission helped to establish, extending short-term credentials for students to enter high demand health care careers. An additional instructor will allow the College to address capacity limitation at P&HCC's main campus and expansion to a second location in Franklin County. Both locations currently have a wait list. Grant funds will support a portion of the salary for the additional healthcare instructor in the first two years, 70% in year one and 50% in year two. The Virginia Board of Nursing limits the instructor to student ratio to 1:10; and the instructor is required prior to consideration of approval of the second training location at The Franklin Center. The applicant reported 329 nurse aid job advertisements in their service region; and confirmation of employer demand was provided for LifePoint Hospitals, Martinsville Health and Rehab, Carillion Clinic, and Sovah Health of Martinsville.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project reveals a proven model by an applicant with a strong track record of project implementation. A detailed budget was provided and a pro-forma analysis demonstrating sustainability following the start-up period. Required match is fully committed at the time of application. The evidence of a wait list at both locations indicates that the training has significant demand, and the current market shows ample employment opportunities for graduates. Staff has concluded that this project is financially viable and a solid investment for the Commission.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$149,140 grant award.

Southwest Virginia Community College

SWCC's EquipEMT: Strengthening Emergency Medical Training through Advanced Equipment (#4170)

\$71,206.00 Requested

Project Summary: Southwest Virginia Community College requests funding to support the purchase of training equipment to serve its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program. The college operates the program at the SWCC campus as well as at Wytheville Community College. The proposed equipment will serve the programs at both locations. The application is seeking TRRC support for 50% (\$71,206) of the cost of multiple simulation manikins and related equipment including Atlas ALS Manikins with REALIT 360 I-Simulate (5), TruMan TraumaX systems (2), Newborn PEDI S109.PK manikin (1), 1-year-old Pediatric Airway Trainers(2), and Atlas ALS Manikins (3).

Matching Funds:

The Southwest Community College Educational Foundation will contribute \$37,000 to be used for equipment purchases. The applicant will also use Perkins Federal Grant Funding (\$34,206) to directly match TRRC funds for equipment purchases.

Project Outputs:

- The project will result in a 20% enrollment increase in three program tracks (the figures reflect enrollment across both the main campus and the WCC campus sites).
 - AAS – Emergency Medical Services Technology (increase of 6)
 - CSC – Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (increase of 3)
 - CSC – Basic EMT Skills (increase of 6)

Staff Comments:

Southwest Community College and Wytheville Community College along with Mountain Empire Community College and Virginia Highlands Community College comprise the Southwest Virginia Paramedic Program (SVPP). Collectively, this is the only emergency medical service program west of Radford and serves adult learners from around the region who wish to enter these career paths. Over the next seven years the need for EMTs is expected to grow by 11%. The demand for Paramedics is expected to grow by 14%. The application notes 14 EMS crews in Southwest Virginia with available positions during the next year. There is a need for 103 EMT positions, 27 Advanced EMT, and 56 paramedics.

Like other healthcare programs, the opportunity for clinical learning opportunities is extremely limited. Much of the “hands on” training must be done in a simulated healthcare setting. Unlike other simulation equipment available throughout the region which simulate a wide variety of medical situation, the equipment requested in this proposal is targeted to simulating the traumatic and emergency events typical for those in these career fields. These include simulations focused on airway, breathing, cardiac, vascular, and gastrointestinal events in both adults and pediatric patients. This project will enhance the education experience for students and will support a very modest increase in enrollment across both sites. These numbers are often reflective of the capacity of these programs. Additional outcomes will be realized over the useful life of the equipment as additional cohorts are able to utilize the equipment.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this indicates a viable project by an applicant with a strong track record of project implementation. A detailed budget was provided as well as a pro-forma analysis demonstrating sustainability of the program. Required match is fully committed at the time of application. It is the only program training EMTs in this section of the region and has considerable demand. It is staff's conclusion that this project would be a positive investment for the Commission for this important line of work.

***Staff Recommendation:* Staff recommends approval of a \$71,206 grant award.**

Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation
Southwest Virginia Regional Simulation Lab for Nursing and Allied Health (#4177)
\$600,000.00 Requested

Project Summary: Commission funds are requested to support the development of the Southwest Virginia Regional Simulation Lab located at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. The 1,200 sq. ft. lab will support several existing healthcare programs and will provide additional clinical training space for allied health and nursing career pathways. Commission funds will be used for equipment purchases (\$426,000), including high, medium and low fidelity adult and pediatric manikins, audio visual equipment, and other items required for simulated medical facilities (hospital room, home care and simulated ambulance). Commission funds will also be used for the renovation of space at the HEC (\$173,730) to house the Lab. Matching funds from a variety of sources will be used for equipment, supplies, and operating support.

Matching Funds:

Matching funds for the development of the lab will be contributed from the Wellspring Foundation (\$400,000 – approved), Appalachian Regional Commission (\$300,000 - approved), Smyth County Community Foundation (\$25,000 – application filed). The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center (\$75,000) and its Foundation (\$100,000) have each committed funding for operational support for staffing and supplies. Funding from The A. Linwood Holton Governor’s School (\$25,000) will also be used for operational support.

Project Outputs:

- The lab is anticipated to serve approximately 450 students, across several programs, annually. These programs include:
 - A. Linwood Holton Governor's School - 170 students
 - Emory & Henry College's "lab school" - 60 students
 - RN to BSN and Family Nurse Practitioner programs (King University, Radford University, and UVA-Wise) – 52 students
 - Appalachian College of Pharmacy - Doctorate of Pharmacy - 42 students
 - EMT/EMS credentials through the Southwest Virginia Paramedic Education program - 100 students
 - Virginia Commonwealth University:
 - Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) and Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia (DNAP) -20 students
 - Clinical Lab Technician - 6 students

Staff Comments:

The need for expanded clinical opportunities is a well-known issue for healthcare programs in the region. Clinical opportunities for students, in real world healthcare settings, are extremely limited. Simulation labs, such as the one under development at the SWCA HEC, serve an important role for programs by providing spaces that allow students to practice clinical decision-making skills in a controlled, life-like environment. The Commission has supported the establishment of individual simulation labs for several, if not all, of the region’s community college and four-year educational institutions. Although these are high quality and well used facilities, the demand for simulated clinical training opportunities continues to exceed the capacity of these spaces. The proposed regional lab will provide additional capacity for programs across the region while creating space for programs, such as those housed at the Higher Education Center, which do not currently have a dedicated lab. The application noted eleven existing organizations and programs likely to

use the facility. These include regional educational programs as well as healthcare organizations. The Higher Education Center has a long track record of successfully housing educational programs at all stages of the career pipeline, from K-12 through graduate level courses. The addition of the simulation lab, along with the Virtual Cadaver Lab supported by TRRC last year, will allow the HEC to offer a premium multi-disciplinary training experience for participants.

Because this facility serves existing training programs, it is not likely to result in substantial new educational outcomes (new degrees or credentials) however it will provide essential training opportunities to the region's allied health and nursing pipelines. There is very strong demand for healthcare providers in all positions and at all levels. This application documented 1,390 open positions with Ballad Health (349 of those in SWVA), 52 openings with Holston Medical Group, and 178 openings with Carilion Clinic within Virginia. Health care fields typically pay above average wages.

Although the requested amount (\$600,000) is quite large relative to other requests received during this funding round, the amount is 38% of the estimated \$1,600,000 total project cost. The applicant will supplement TRRC funds with a variety of local, state, federal, and private funding sources to fully construct, equip, operate and sustain the lab. The HEC's educational partners pay annual operating fees to the Center. These fees will now include usage of the Lab. Additional users, such as area health systems, will also have access to the Lab will allow the Lab to generate a small amount of revenue. Because the priority will be to first serve educational partners, it is difficult to estimate the amount of revenue from these users.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project indicates a well-designed model by an applicant with a strong track record of project implementation. A detailed budget was provided and was backed up with recent vendor quotes. \$900,000 of the declared match of \$1,000,000 is fully committed at the time of application. The project is cost-effective as it allows access to high-tech health care simulation lab for several educational and training organizations across the region. Staff has concluded that this project is financially viable and a solid investment for the Commission, especially in a time where there is a shortage of nurses and other health care providers.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$600,000 grant award.

Danville Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.

Danville Community College's Class-B Commercial Driver's License Non-Credit Workforce Program (#4179)

\$291,000.00 Requested

Project Summary: In response to the college's community partners, Danville Community College (DCC) created a Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL A) during the spring 2023 semester. Since creating the CDL A program, DCC's Workforce Services has received many requests from community partners to create a Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL B) program to meet area needs. This proposal for funding is in direct response to the needs expressed by businesses and industries in the DCC service region. DCC has located and preliminarily secured a potential site in the City of Danville to offer the CDL B training. DCC intends to place a modular building on this site which would provide an office for a faculty member, a classroom for instruction, an onsite bathroom for the instructor and students and additional space to house a new CDL Simulator designated for CDL B students. This modular building would be temperature controlled to allow for year-round CDL B training opportunities.

Matching Funds:

- \$343,000 Danville Community College - Support for new staff position, supplies, continuous charges, and equipment during 2-year start-up period.
- \$15,000 City of Danville – To be requested for site development costs

Project Outputs:

- Establish new Class B CDL program with modular classroom and simulator
- Class B Commercial Driver's License – 60 credentials awarded annually

Staff Comments:

DCC is requesting grant funds for purchase of a 24' X 50' mobile modular classroom (\$122,081), and a CDL B simulator with related training services (\$111,000), which is required for start-up of a new Class B CDL program. Matching funds will support other start-up costs for the program including hiring a new instructor, site improvements, equipment, supplies and operating costs. This project expands on the Class A CDL program launched in the spring in partnership with Patrick & Henry Community College. This short-term workforce credential can be completed within 3 weeks providing workforce opportunities for jobs with average wages ranging from \$15 to \$40 per hour (depending on size of company, mileage compensation and benefits). The proposed location for the Class B CDL program is on an available property owned by the City of Danville located near DCC's main campus that meets concrete pad size and load requirements for the program. A draft lease agreement for a 5-year term renewable annually was provided. TRRC staff requested detailed cost-estimates be provided for both a lease and purchase option for the modular classroom to evaluate if leasing was a more cost-effective option. An additional \$29,081 of grant funds would be needed for the purchase option at \$122,081, providing longer term use of the classroom facility, compared to \$93,000 for a 3-year lease. The cost estimate from Boxx Modular for purchasing the modular classroom was less than originally budgeted, which reduced the funding request to \$233,081.

DCC identified six privately owned businesses with identified need to fill 52 positions immediately (Commonwealth Document Management, Danville Distributing Company, First Piedmont Corporation, Foster Fuels, Seller Brothers construction & Excavation, Supply Resources/Thrive Logistics); and listed several other private employers and public school systems in the DCC service area with expressed need to hire CDL B licensed drivers. Virginia DMV is now requiring that all new Virginia CDL drivers complete an approved Virginia CDL driver education course, and licenses are issued based on the class and type of commercial license. No other community colleges within a one-hour drive are currently offering the Class B CDL certification training program. DCC plans to offer up to ten cohorts annually, serving between 60-75 participants, and estimates 60 students will complete the program and receive CDL B certifications annually.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project indicates it is a highly achievable endeavor with strong support and involvement from the community. The project budget is detailed, reasonable and backed up with current quotes for requested equipment. The project has more than the minimum required match funding committed at the time of the application. It is staff's conclusion that the grant would be a solid investment for the Commission and will be an asset to employers in need of these drivers.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$233,081 grant award including costs for purchase of the mobile modular classroom.

**Mountain Empire Community College
Heavy Equipment Operator Program (#4175)
\$92,705.00 Requested**

Project Summary: Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) seeks \$92,705 in funding to support the establishment of a Heavy Equipment Operator II training program at MECC's Center for Workforce and Innovation of Appalachia. This training program is put forward to meet regional and state demand for skilled workers in construction industries. Commission funds will be used to purchase equipment and supplies including a Bobcat Telehandler, Safety Cones and Barrels, and a Laser Level. This equipment is required for the NCCER HEO Level II training. The College is currently developing a HEO Level I program that will provide a pipeline of students for the Level II training. The first HEO I cohort is scheduled to begin in January 2024. HEO II will begin in July 2024.

Matching Funds:

The applicant will utilize a portion of an existing AMLER grant (\$44,831) to match the TRRC request. These funds will be used for renovations to the CWIA Instructional Space required for the program. This amount was calculated based upon the square footage dedicated for this program. A John Deere Compact Utility Tractor & Tiller was purchased in August 2023. This equipment was required for the HEO I Program scheduled to begin January 2024. Upon review, TRRC staff determined that the purchase (\$40,940) may serve as cash match for this application. Mountain Empire will also contribute instructional supplies (\$6,934) required for Pearson Proforma & NCCER instruction/ testing.

Project Outputs:

- Twenty students will enroll in HEO II annually with 15 completing the program. These students will also earn the following credentials: HEO I (prerequisite), NCCER Core, NCCER Equipment Operator Level I, and VDOT Work Zone Flagger Certification.

Staff Comments:

This request supports MECC’s ongoing effort to establish its Center for Workforce and Innovation in Appalachia (CWIA). This facility, a former elementary school, houses several of MECC’s training programs including Lineman, CDL, Dental Assisting, and the newly created Precision Machining program. Each of these programs have received TRRC funding in recent years. Since 2018 the Commission has provided nearly \$1.1 million to support renovations and program related equipment and other expenses. The establishment of the CWIA has allowed MECC to create and expand programs which, due to space constraints, could not be accommodated at the main campus.

Both the Heavy Equipment Operator Level I and Level II programs are noncredit, short-term credentials available through the VCCS FastForward Program. Employees with HEO certifications are in very high demand. The application notes that heavy equipment operators are required on multiple types of job sites including those performing construction, mining, and/ or excavation work. Several local employers including Glass Machinery, McFall Excavating, Elk Knob, Inc. and Coronado Coal, provided letters of support documenting the need for these candidates. Compensation for Heavy Equipment Operators averages \$41,900 annually.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project indicates it is a viable endeavor that will benefit the area’s construction firms with skilled, certified workers. The project budget is detailed, reasonable and backed up with current quotes for requested equipment. The project sufficient match funding committed at the time of the application, which will be used towards renovating space for the program’s expansion. It is staff’s conclusion that the project shows great promise and provides a positive benefit for the cost.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$92,705 grant award.

**Southside Virginia Community College Foundation
Accelerating Truck Driver Training at SVCC (#4172)
\$316,000.00 Requested**

Executive Summary: Southside Virginia Community College is proposing an expansion to its Truck Driver Training program. The truck driving industry is rapidly changing and evolving in both the state and the nation. Demand for truck drivers is at an all-time high. In response to increased workforce demand and legislation requiring CDL test-takers to complete coursework through a certified training facility, SVCC proposes adding an additional four trucks and four trailers to its fleet and hiring an additional truck driver training instructor. Two of the trucks and trailers (provided by SVCC match) will replace outdated equipment in SVCC’s existing fleet, improving safety and the quality of instruction. The additional two trucks and trailers requested through TRRC Competitive Education funding will be used to expand the fleet and increase the capacity of the program. The expansion will necessitate an additional instructor, which will be covered by SVCC match.

Matching Funds:

- \$402,940 from Southside Virginia Community College to fund additional instructor and purchase two replacement tractor-trailers for current fleet

Project Outputs:

- Replacement of outdated equipment and addition of two tractor-trailers to expand fleet and access to the training program
- Increase number of cohorts from 12 to 14, with 24 additional credentials awarded annually to bring total program completions projected to 206 each year

Staff Comments:

Southside Virginia Community College's Truck Driver Training (TDT) school is the only TDT program that exists within SVCC's 4,200 square mile service area. Similar programs exist in Richmond and Danville. However, many students must drive long distances to access these programs. Furthermore, many students within the service area experience poverty and inadequate access to transportation, making these neighboring programs inaccessible for many individuals. SVCC has provided truck driver training since 1996.

There is high demand for qualified, certified tractor-trailer drivers in the region. The Virginia Employment Commission reports that by 2030, the industry "Transportation and Material Moving Occupations" is projected to increase by nearly 15% within the Commonwealth. The Virginia Trucking Association estimated that the driver shortage in Virginia is approximately 1,800. The demand for certified CDL training programs is even greater, because of the impact of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's mandate in February 2022 requiring entry level CDL drivers to have formal training. SVCC has established relationships with over 70 employers that actively hire TDT graduates, who report annual salaries between \$60,000 - \$75,000 plus benefits.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project reveals a solid, sustainable model by an applicant with a strong track record of project implementation. A detailed budget was provided with documentation, and required match is fully committed at the time of application. The proposal demonstrated that the training has significant demand, and the current market shows ample employment opportunities for graduates. Staff has concluded that this project is financially viable and a good investment for the Commission.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$316,000 grant award.

Virginia Highlands Community College Educational Foundation

VHCC Diesel Technology Expansion (#4173)

\$202,300.00 Requested

Project Summary: Virginia Highlands Community College seeks funding to expand its diesel technology programming. Commission funds (\$202,300) will be used to purchase equipment including high-capacity lift systems, heavy duty forklifts, high weight capacity diesel engine stands, a live front axle with air disc brake assembly, and a large tire balancing apparatus. This equipment will allow VHCC to modernize its existing diesel technology related programs (Diesel Technology CSC, Diesel Technology AAS, and Commercial Driver's License) to meet current standards. Two new programs will be created as a result of the project. Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Levels I and II will added to the College's Fast Forward program offerings. Matching funds will be used to purchase additional equipment including necessary to replace worn and obsolete equipment with modern industry standard items.

Matching Funds: Matching funds will be provided by VHCC through VCCS Equipment Trust Funds Allocation (\$159,300) and Carl D. Perkins Funding Allocation (\$43,000)

Project Outputs:

- The project will result in the expansion of three programs, Diesel Technology AAS, Diesel Technology CSC, and CDL. Two new programs, HEO I and HEO II, will be created. The following credentials will be completed annually.
 - Diesel Technology CSC – 12 (increase of 4)
 - Diesel Technology AAS – 5 (increase of 3)
 - HEO I – 10
 - HEO II – 10
 - CDL – 70 (increase of 20)

Staff Comments:

Virginia Highlands Community College is currently the only community college location in the region that offers Diesel Technology programs that lead to an academic credential (Diesel Technology CSC and Diesel Technology AAS). Other existing programs, such as the one offered by Southwest Virginia Community College, are non-credit programs. VHCC has operated these programs since 2008 at off campus locations. The programs will move on campus once construction of the new Advanced Workforce and Technology Center is complete. The funding requested in this application will allow the college to expand its course offerings to include HEO I and II credentials while also enhancing the quality of the existing Diesel Technology programs through the purchase of modern, industry standard equipment. Each student will be provided the opportunity to earn multiple credentials.

The project will result in 52 additional credentials awarded each year. The majority of these can be attributed to the new HEO programs (20) and CDL (20). The Diesel Technology Programs will both see an increase of approximately 6 students enrolled in each of the CSC and AAS programs. According to VHCC’s internal data, 89% of students enrolled in the CSC course will successfully complete and earn the credential however a much smaller number will complete the AAS degree. When questioned about the low completion rate, VHCC provided information indicating that, due to the extremely high demand for diesel trained employees, 75% of students are employed in the field before they even complete the CSC trainings. Many students chose to enter employment and do not continue to complete an associate degree. The application noted an anticipated demand for an additional 47 skilled workers per year with average compensation of \$40,726.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this indicates a viable project by an applicant with a long history of for-credit training in diesel technology. A detailed, reasonable budget was provided with documentation of costs for equipment. Required match is fully committed at the time of application. Sustainability will be dependent on consistent enrollment driving ongoing tuition revenue and state funding. It is staff’s conclusion that this project would be a solid investment for the Commission in terms of generating skilled workers for this industry.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a \$202,300 grant award.

Wytheville Community College

Wytheville Community College WEST - Workforce, Education, & Skills Training Center (#4174)

\$277,000.00 Requested

Project Summary: Commission funds are requested to assist Wytheville Community College with the development of the WCC Workforce, Education, & Skills Training (WEST) Center. This facility, a former automotive dealership, located in Marion, VA was recently acquired by Smyth County, which then leased it to the College. The WEST Center will allow WCC to open a satellite location to house Fast Forward eligible (short term) programs for automotive, off-road diesel, and welding. TRRC funds will be used for facility improvements (\$212,000) and to purchase Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) tools required to receive accreditation for the program. Additional equipment will be purchased using matching funds provided by WCC.

Matching Funds:

Wytheville Community College has committed \$277,000 of HEETF (Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund) funding for the project.

Project Outputs:

- The project will result in establishment of a new WCC satellite location. The application estimates that the facility will serve 38 students, receiving a total of 230 credentials, during the first year of operation.
 - ASE Automotive Electrical/ Electronics Program – 10 students/ 30 industry credentials
 - ASE Automotive Brakes Program – 8 students/ 30 industry credentials
 - Off-Road Diesel – 10 students/ 140 industry credentials
 - Welding – 10 students/ 30 industry credentials

Staff Comments:

This request will allow WCC to expand its workforce and occupational program offerings to the western end of its service region. The WEST Center will initially house three short term (Fast Forward and G3 eligible) training opportunities in welding, automotive, and off-road diesel. Welding is currently offered at another of WCC's satellite locations, the Crossroads Institute, in Galax. By locating a second program in Marion will allow WCC to more effectively serve students across its entire service region. The College's automotive program, currently housed at the Wythe County Schools Technology Center, will be relocated to the WEST Center. The new space will allow the program to accommodate two additional students per year. The off-road diesel program is believed to be the first program in Virginia to focus on off-road equipment (UTV's zero-turn mowers, tractors, excavators, skid steers, etc.).

Letters of support documenting the need for graduates of these programs were provided by Crabtree Buick & GMC, Boone Tractor, and Smyth County Machine. The creation of the WEST Center will provide 38 potential employees for these and other regional employers the first year and in future years. WCC plans to add additional programs to the WEST Center as the development of the center continues.

Financial Viability Assessment:

A review of key viability criteria for this project indicates high demand for an expansion of occupational training in key job sectors, to be completed by an applicant with a strong track record of project implementation. The budget is detailed, reasonable and provides for sufficient capacity to carry out the project. However, estimates were not able to be provided in time to fully confirm the costs of equipment and renovation. As such, the placement of a contingency on approval of budget after confirmation of cost estimates is recommended. Notwithstanding that, the project appears to be straightforward and financially viable, with sustainability to be driven by consistent student enrollment.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of a grant award up to \$277,000, conditioned upon the Grants Director's approval of final documented cost estimates from vendors/contractors for equipment and renovations.