



## **Vision Shared Goals for West Virginia's Future**

**GOAL 1: ENTREPRENEURSHIP** — By 2015, West Virginia ranks first in the nation in the percentage of residents who start a business.

**GOAL 2: EDUCATION** — By 2020, West Virginia ranks first in the United States for reading and math scores of grade 4 and grade 8 students.

**GOAL 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** — By 2020, West Virginia ranks among the top 20% internationally for the percentage of adults with an associate degree or higher.

**GOAL 4: RESEARCH AND COMMERCIALIZATION** — By 2020, West Virginia ranks among the top 25% of the U.S. in the percentage of its workforce employed in private sector, high tech industries.

### **NEW COMMITTEE ACTION PLANS**

The hallmark of Vision Shared's success since inception is its strong volunteer network.

Passionate West Virginians have donated thousands of hours in the last 10 years. They have provided a roadmap for entrepreneurial growth, offered ideas to help the state capture more federal funding and worked with partners to develop a database dedicated solely to West Virginia's nonprofit sector (public release of this project is pending).

Vision Shared volunteers have helped to improve the health and wellness of our citizens and examine the way this state delivers health care. We also have incubated new organizations and helped them grow and succeed in areas such as technology based economic development and promoting the interests of West Virginia's young talent.

In this new era of operation, Vision Shared's new committee structure will operate with the same values and practices that has made our organization successful since inception.

We assemble people who often may disagree and help them put their individual issues aside so they can work together. Stakeholders from all sides of an issue are welcome at the Vision Shared table. We promote a respectful environment that is conducive to problem-solving and consensus-building.

The action plans on the pages that follow will serve as a guide for our committees. The Board of Directors will not limit the committees only to the work listed, but these activities are highlighted as principle steps in helping West Virginia's economy advance.

Our volunteers will continue to have the flexibility they always have had to ask the Board of Directors to expand our scope of work to meet West Virginia's challenges as they arise. But we will balance that with the discipline required to make gains and achieve results in our goal areas. By working together to meet this

state's needs during a time of economic transition, West Virginia can and will become a global economic competitor.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: By 2015, West Virginia ranks first in the nation in the percentage of residents who start a business.**

Start-up activities:

- Review the Vision Shared Entrepreneurship Team's Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Development in West Virginia plus other relevant background materials.
- Explore reviving the Young Entrepreneurs Support Network (YESNetwork)
- Review current legislation related to entrepreneurial growth.
- Review the current entrepreneurship activities available in the state.
- Determine barriers to entrepreneurship in West Virginia.
- Recruit other entrepreneurship committee members.

Action Steps for the Remainder of Year 1:

- Explore/pursue legislation allowing entrepreneurial growth to happen.
- Study successful entrepreneurship programs or tools (i.e. low-interest loan programs, education/curriculum in schools, employee-stock ownership partnership creation) across the nation and analyze applicability to West Virginia.
- Analyze curriculum and encourage coordinate entrepreneurship education from public school to higher education (include all apprenticeship/certificate programs, not just community and technical colleges and four-year schools).
- Via a media and education campaign, educate the public on entrepreneurship as a career option. Remove the mystery of starting a business. Celebrate successful entrepreneurs.
- Conduct a survey to understand the challenges of small business owners.
- Build an entrepreneurship feedback panel.

Action Steps for Years 2-3:

- Implement entrepreneurial training programs in schools, K-12 or higher.
- Increase availability of capital for start-ups by passing legislation to establish funds for start-ups or promote the development of additional/expanded community development financial institutions.
- Encourage state government to assign a statewide entrepreneurship "czar."

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: By 2020, West Virginia ranks first in the United States for reading and math scores of grade 4 and grade 8 students.**

Start-Up Activities:

- Meet with state education leaders to discuss aligning the state's educational standards to meet the Vision Shared goals, i.e. establish a partnership with the Dept. of Education/Board of Education to increase their standards. Include union leaders, parents, students, legislative education leaders, Higher Education Policy Commission, Council for Community and Technical Colleges, Education Alliance, etc.
- Understand where we are and why (include vulnerabilities, health, etc., of parents and kids); determine reasons we are behind.

- Ask for representation of all stakeholders/players to participate in committee, from students to policymakers.
- Develop a system that supports social needs of children and their educational needs.
- Look at international success models/global leaders.
- Bring in leaders from successful models or send us there.

#### Action Steps for the remainder of Year 1:

- Collaborate with the new Early Childhood Advisory Council (formerly PIECES)
- Embark on a media campaign to persuade the public that: 1) the education system in West Virginia and the United States is in crisis; 2) failure is not an option; 3) West Virginians must develop, for the sake of their children, a self-expectation of becoming educated AND being able to work. Coordinate the media campaign with local sessions built on public and private local partnerships.
- Abandon a one-size-fits-all policy – look at other indicators of success in schools rather than just test scores.
- Read research and recommendations that already exist.

#### Action Steps for the years 2-3:

- Increase funding for education programs.
- Develop a marketing campaign to promote and encourage higher educational attainment (to overcome cultural/family challenges to becoming educated or combat the argument that “if you become educated, you’ll leave us.”)
- Re-examine the Vision Shared goal language for education to see whether it remains the right goal.
- Develop and fund early childhood programs to help them success in school and in life.
- Examine year-round schools or charter schools.
- Take a holistic look at solving education problems (social issues), such as the Geoffrey Canada model.
- Focus on promoting the school as the community center.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: By 2020, West Virginia ranks among the top 20% internationally for the percentage of adults with an associate degree or higher.**

#### Start-up activities:

- Examine how graduation rates and drop-out rates are calculated for secondary and higher ed.
- Examine the governor’s National Governor’s Association program, “Complete to Compete” and develop a model appropriate for West Virginia.
- Acknowledge “non-degree” programs as a path to good jobs/careers.

#### Action Steps for the remainder of Year 1:

- Develop an inventory of all existing workforce development programs.
- Look at what kind of support systems students need to keep them from dropping out or to be successful (i.e. social support, level of high school remedial skills affecting success in college).
- Examine just what goes on during the two years of an associate’s degree. Push for practical skills (business math and business writing), then get industry to the table to talk about how structure of two-year degree programs can improve.
- Promote cooperative efforts among workforce investment boards, community and technical colleges and K-12 to model best practices and avoid duplication.

- Analyze performance of workforce investment boards and push for more accountability.

Action Steps for years 2-3:

- Confirmation of programmatic alignment of available jobs.
- Build a plan to address what has been learned during the first year of the committee's work.
- Develop solutions for financial barriers for post-secondary education (two-year, four-year, etc.)
- Develop transition programs from high school to college, i.e. College 101 – a college-readiness class statewide, in all schools.
- Promote a better match-up between what the workforce needs versus what colleges and universities are producing (perhaps via forums between business leaders and academia to produce graduates the workforce actually needs).

## **RESEARCH AND COMMERCIALIZATION COMMITTEE**

**GOAL: By 2020, West Virginia ranks among the top 25% of the U.S. with regards to the percentage of its workforce employed in private sector, high tech industries.**

Startup activities:

- Coordinate Vision Shared Activities with TechConnect, Create WV and other organizations
- In addition to the Blueprint, review what has been accomplished in this area
- Review the Blueprint for Technology-Based Economic Development in West Virginia.

Action Steps for the remainder of Year 1:

- Review best policy options and develop an advocacy agenda with TechConnect.
- Sell the TechConnect Blueprint and Vision Shared advocacy agenda for commercialization.

Action Steps for Years 2-3:

- Sell the Blueprint even more as state entities learn to compete for federal money in a post-earmark environment.
- Get the State of West Virginia to invest in the "Innovation Economy."
- Examine whether the Vision Shared goal has the correct metric attached to it.

For more information or to make a donation:

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