

VIRGINIA READY



Retraining Virginia's Unemployed to Get Back to Work

OVERVIEW:

As the economic fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the Virginia Ready Initiative (VA Ready) formed with the urgent need to get Virginians back to work. Virginia's newly filed unemployment claims approached 800,000 by June of 2020. This impact has disproportionately been felt both by workers in lower paid industries (e.g., food service, accommodation) and by racial minorities.

The Virginia Ready Initiative (VA Ready) is a public charity focused on retraining Virginia's unemployed for in-demand occupations in high-growth industries. VA Ready brought together over 35 leading companies across Virginia and established a partnership with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the Commonwealth's existing FastForward Workforce Credential Program.

VA Ready provides registered VA Ready Scholars a \$1,000 Credential Achievement Award upon obtaining the final credential in selected training programs in the following sectors: computer and cyber, healthcare and manufacturing/skilled trades.

ELIGIBILITY:

Anyone who is currently unemployed and eligible to enroll in a FastForward program is qualified to become a VA Ready Scholar. The start date for the FastForward training must be on or after August 1, 2020 to ensure all processes are ready for students' success, including assistance with obtaining employment. **FastForward eligibility is not based on employment status nor enrollment in the VA Ready Scholar program.**

PARTNERSHIP:



****Eligible Programs:**

Note: Program certifications and occupational requirements may vary by college and may require more than one credentialing program to be completed in preparation for the affiliated career.

Computer and Cyber:

- Cisco Networking Technician
- CompTIA A+
- COMPTIA IT fundamentals)
- CompTIA Linux+
- CompTIA Network+
- CompTIA Server+
- Information Systems Security
- AWS Cloud Practitioner
- AWS Certified Solutions Architect

Healthcare:

- Medical Assistant
- Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)
- Medication Aide
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Pharmacy Technician
- Billing and Coding Specialist
- Professional Coder
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Medical administrative assistant
- Medical Scribe
- EKG Technician

Select Trades and Others:

- Welding
- Marine Trades Training
- Power Line Worker
- Machining
- Electrical and Electrical Systems
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- CDL License A

**Although this is the current list of eligible programs, the list is subject to change. No other programs are part of this initiative at this time.

VA Ready used a rigorous approach to identify in-demand occupations across three broad industry categories that are eligible for the program. Those industry categories are: **Computer and Cyber, Healthcare, and Selected Trades.**

We focused on occupations with the most need for skilled workers, the skills that can be acquired through short-term programs, and programs that are already part of Virginia's FastForward initiative.

We also understand these programs differ across community colleges. If you have any questions about program eligibility for the VA Ready Scholar, please contact [info@VA Ready.org](mailto:info@VAReady.org).



We need your help to ensure all interested students know about the VA Ready program!

Questions Potential Scholars May Ask:

Why must scholars be unemployed to be eligible?

One of VA Ready's primary objectives is to address the unprecedented unemployment crisis caused in large part by COVID-19. We believe we can make the most impact by helping people who are out of work gain the skills necessary to fill in-demand jobs.

How do I help potential scholars sign-up to be a VA Ready Scholar?

A student who is eligible to enroll in a FastForward program will receive information regarding those offerings that are selected and approved for VA Ready. Next, interested students can sign-up for VA Ready at the VAReady.org website. Once there, students will be asked to provide basic information and click to agree to the VA Ready Scholars Agreement. When the Agreement has been accepted, the student will be notified of their status as a VA Ready Scholar.

Is there a deadline for signing up to be a VA Ready Scholar to receive the Credential Achievement Award?

Students should be sure to sign-up for the VA Ready Scholars program prior to the start date of their FastForward course to ensure eligibility for the program.

How do students get access to support services?

Students will be provided with career resources through the VA Ready website. We will connect students to nearby Career Works centers to help with resume building, interview prep, etc., as well as to provide links to online resources. We will also offer a Job Exchange Board on the VA Ready website with posts from our Business Partners. Visit VAReady.org for more information; please note that we are working to provide these resources as soon as possible for this new initiative.

When do students receive the award?

The student will receive the \$1,000 Credential Achievement Award after the student provides evidence they have completed the credential to the associated VCCS college and at VAReady.org.

If students achieve a credential and earn the \$1,000 Credential Achievement Award, will the student lose eligibility for financial aid?

For questions on financial aid eligibility, please check with the college financial aid office and/or FastForward Career Coach.

Will students be taxed on the \$1,000?

It depends on the student's income. Please consult the Virginia Income Website and a tax advisor.

