

The SkillSource Group, Inc.

**Evaluation of the
Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship
Consortium (VETEC) Program**

Outreach, Recruitment, and Intake Process Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC) is a federally-funded program designed to help eligible individuals attain long-term economic self-sufficiency through self-employment. VETEC integrates entrepreneurship services within the existing public workforce system and provides training and technical assistance to Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-eligible adults and dislocated workers interested in starting their own business. The VETEC model builds off the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (GATE) initiatives.

This report describes the outreach, recruitment, and intake processes followed by the three sites in Year 1 of the grant, and assesses them as to their fidelity to the VETEC project model. Information for each site was collected through site visits conducted by IMPAQ researchers during October and November 2013.

VETEC operates as a consortium of three Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) – ENOVATE in Northern Virginia (LWIA#11), Greater Richmond GATE (LWIA#9), and Launch Hampton Roads (LWIA#16). Although the VETEC intake process is intended to follow a specified program model, each region is in charge of its own VETEC activities. Our main finding is that – contrary to its program design – the VETEC program is being operated differently at each site, with significant variation across sites in organizational structure, delivered information sessions, and the application process.

The information sessions at ENOVATE and Greater Richmond (GR) GATE are largely similar to that specified by the VETEC model; however, the information session at Launch Hampton Roads is much longer than the model's recommended 45 to 60 minutes and includes information not covered by the VETEC model's information session agenda. With respect to the application process, ENOVATE closely follows the application submission process specified by the VETEC model. But both the GR GATE and the Launch Hampton Roads application processes differ significantly from that of the VETEC model. At GR GATE and Hampton Roads, prospective applicants complete WIA application and assessment materials much earlier than is specified in the VETEC model. Once an individual attends an information session at Hampton Roads, the application process also includes a series of steps in addition to those prescribed in VETEC model, which makes the application process onerous and can deter potential applicants from applying to VETEC. Based on these findings, we have identified a series of lessons learned that sites can use to re-tool their intake procedures to be more consistent with the program model.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to review the early implementation of the VETEC program to identify any implementation challenges being experienced among the three participating sites and to suggest potential solutions to the challenges identified. To gather the necessary information, the IMPAQ team visited each of the three VETEC sites during October and November 2013 to collect information on the outreach, recruitment, and intake activities being undertaken there. In this chapter we provide an overview of the labor market characteristics of the Commonwealth of Virginia and describe the VETEC grant program and its components.

1.1 Virginia Labor Market Characteristics

Small businesses and entrepreneurs play a significant labor market role in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with nearly 86 percent of all businesses having fewer than 20 employees.¹ To highlight the importance of business in the Commonwealth, 2012 was declared by Virginia Governor Robert McDonnell as “The Year of the Entrepreneur.” Virginia also ranks among highest in the nation in veterans per capita. In 2011, veterans made up about 10.7 percent of the state’s population, well above the national average of 9.0 percent.²

In 2010, small businesses (fewer than 500 employees) employed about 37 percent of the employed population and earned a total of \$58,569,041. In 2011, while the national unemployment rate stood at 8.9 percent, Virginia as a whole averaged 7.6 percent. Still, over 400,000 Virginians visited the Commonwealth’s thirty-two American Job Centers (AJCs), highlighting the importance of expanding workforce services to tens of thousands of job seekers. Exhibit 1 illustrates the statewide labor market conditions and small business statistics.

Exhibit 1: Local Labor Market Conditions for Virginia

	Statewide	Veterans	Non-Veterans
Population of Area	8,015,502	855,364	7,160,138
Unemployment Rate	7.6%	5.0%	7.8%
Labor Force Participation Rate	66.1%	62.1%	66.6%
Self-employed (% of labor force)	315,506 (7.6%)	37,207 (8.1%)	278,229 (7.6%)
Poverty Rate	11.6%		
# of Small Businesses (<500 Employees)	152,083		
# Employed by Small Businesses (% of all employed)	1,424,936 (37.2%)		
Total Earnings by Small Business Employees	\$58,569,041		

Source: American Community Survey, 2011; U.S. Census, SAIPE 2011; U.S. Census 2010 County Business Patterns

¹ Small Business Profile-Virginia, SBA, Office of Advocacy, 2011: <http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/va12.pdf>.

² 18 and above population, USDOL, BLS: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/vet.a.htm>

1.2 Overview of the VETEC Grant

The Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC) is a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) federally-funded 52-month grant program designed to assist eligible individuals attain long-term economic self-sufficiency through self-employment.³ Since current public workforce system outcomes are more suited to wage and salary employment, jobseekers interested in self-employment may not receive the same level or intensity of services as those seeking traditional employment. VETEC seeks to address this service gap by integrating entrepreneurship services within the workforce system and making self-employment a viable alternative to traditional jobs. Using previous DOL-funded Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (GATE) initiatives as a model, VETEC provides eligible jobseekers with entrepreneurship training and technical assistance to start their own business.

As part of the WIF funding requirements, all grantees are required to engage a third party independent evaluator to examine the impact of the grant on workforce outcomes. In Fall 2012, the SkillSource Group Inc. (the lead grantee) contracted with IMPAQ International to conduct the VETEC Evaluation. As the external evaluator, IMPAQ is responsible for all components of the evaluation process. This responsibility includes conducting the random assignment processes; managing the Participant Tracking System (PTS) that captures program participant outcomes; providing technical assistance on the PTS and random assignment to all three VETEC sites; and conducting the interim and final analyses of the program.

Currently, VETEC services are offered in the following three Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) (Exhibit 2)⁴:

- Northern Virginia (Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board, LWIA#11) – the ENOVATE program
- Richmond (Capital Region Workforce Partnership, LWIA#9) – the Greater Richmond (GR) GATE program
- Hampton Roads (Opportunity, Inc., LWIA#16) – the Launch Hampton Roads program

While each program within the consortium has its own unique brand and project name, as shown in Exhibit 3, VETEC is designed to operate as a single program carried out in three regions. According to the VETEC model, each region's program should provide the same set of entrepreneurial and training services, so that participating individuals have the same experience regardless of the region in which they live.

³ http://www.myskillsource.org/home/aboutus_programs_vetec.shtml

⁴ LWIAs, workforce areas, sites, and regions will be used interchangeably throughout this report.

Exhibit 2: Location of VETEC Sites

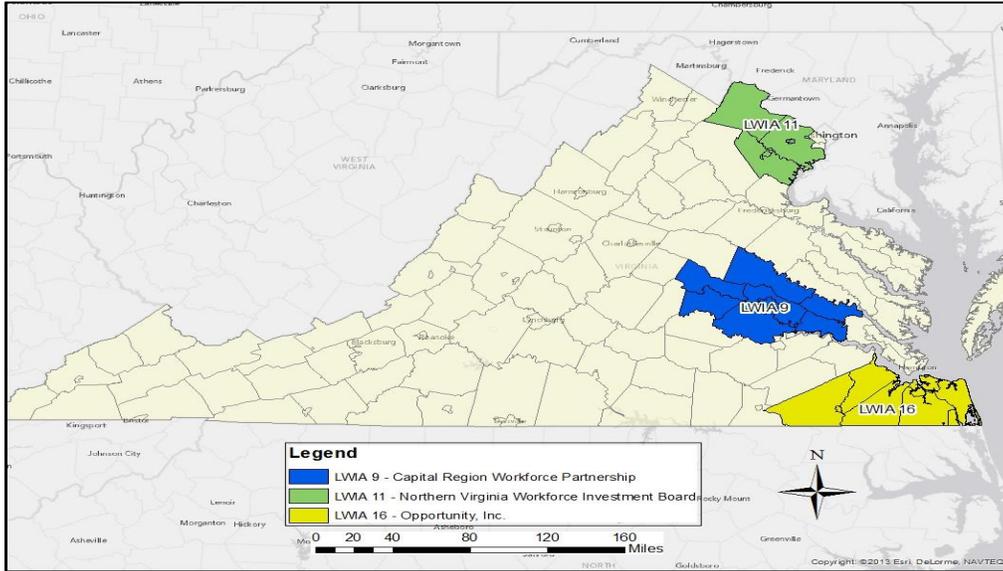


Exhibit 3: Project VETEC by Site



The primary objectives of the overall VETEC mission are the following:

- Improve the prosperity of workers, businesses, and communities. This is done by providing unemployed and underemployed jobseekers with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and community support necessary to become successfully self-employed.
- Promote policy change within Virginia and its local workforce systems by supporting self-employment as a viable career choice for jobseekers.
- Provide short-term, focused entrepreneurial training and support services to veterans.

VETEC services have been offered since May 2013 and are projected to serve a total of 1,200 jobseekers over the 52-month grant period. To receive VETEC services, individuals must be

WIA-eligible adults and dislocated workers over age 18, with priority given to veterans.⁵ Once an individual is determined eligible for the program, s/he is required to go through a series of intake procedures. These procedures, which are outlined by the VETEC program model, are intended to serve as the baseline for each site’s program implementation.

1.3 VETEC Enrollment To Date

Exhibit 4 provides a summary of the VETEC enrollment across the three sites. As of December 2013, a total of 824 individuals have attended a VETEC information session. Out of these 824 individuals, 482 were determined to be eligible for the program, 309 have applied and 258 gone through the random assignment process. Of those that applied, 51 individuals had veterans preference and were not subject to random assignment. These 51 individuals were automatically enrolled in the program. Since individuals have a 50 percent chance of being assigned to the treatment group, 129 applicants have been enrolled to receive program services. With a goal to enroll 280 individuals by December 2013, project VETEC is currently at 46 percent of its projected enrollment. Out of 180 individuals enrolled in the program, 90 percent are receiving the program services.

Exhibit 4: VETEC Enrollment Through December 2013

Performance Outcomes	Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium (VETEC)
Attended Information Session	824
Determined WIA Eligible	482
Total Applicants	309
Assigned to Treatment Group	129
Assigned to Control Group	129
Veterans Enrolled	51
Receiving Services	161

Source: Participant Tracking System

Note: Total Applicants is the sum of: Assigned to Treatment Group, Assigned to Control Group and Veterans Enrolled. Veterans are not subject to random assignment.

1.4 Report Purpose and Structure

The intent of this report is to compare actual program operations in each site during the early stages of program implementation with the operations specified in the VETEC model, to provide guidance for program improvement. This, in turn, will enable a truer test of the VETEC model.

⁵ http://www.myskillssource.org/home/aboutus_programs_vetec.shtml

This report describes the VETEC project model and then highlights the specific outreach, recruitment, and intake activities at each of the three participating sites. The findings presented here are based on a combination of information obtained via in-depth site visits that included semi-structured interviews, participation in local information sessions, focus group discussions with potential participants after the information session, and thorough reviews of all site- and project-specific documents and materials. During each site visit, IMPAQ team members interviewed the overall VETEC director, each site director, case managers, and other program staff actively involved in outreach and recruitment.⁶

Chapter 2 presents the VETEC model's outreach and recruitment processes sites were intended to use in implementing their programs; Chapter 3 describes Employing Northern Virginia Through Entrepreneurship (ENOVATE); Chapter 4 describes GR GATE; and Chapter 5 describes Launch Hampton Roads. Chapter 6 presents a summary of findings for each site and compares sites' recruitment and intake activities to those specified by the VETEC model. Chapter 7 concludes the report with a set of recommendations for improvement. A series of appendices detail the documents we collected from each site related to their outreach, recruitment, and intake activities.

⁶ Detailed methodology for the site visits is reported in Appendix A.

2. THE VETEC OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT MODEL

The VETEC model specifies an outreach, recruitment, and intake methodology that relies on significant staff effort to create awareness about the program and enroll participants. Of particular note are standard operating procedures to specifically target prospective participants and attract them to a program information session. As discussed in the VETEC grant submission to DOL, these operating procedures involve common outreach and recruitment methods intended for use across all sites.

This chapter describes the strategies the VETEC model specifies that sites should use at each step of the intake process. The information presented here should serve as the baseline for all outreach and recruitment activities and guide the VETEC intake process across all sites.⁷ Section 2.1 introduces the key players and partners responsible for implementing the model's intake activities, and how they should be communicating with one another. Section 2.2 details the outreach and recruitment activities, the information session, and the application process as specified in the VETEC model.

2.1 Key Players

The VETEC model specifies an overall program director, under whom each site is intended to pursue an organized, concerted effort from the following key players:

- **VETEC Project Director** – The VETEC Project Director is responsible for overall program oversight and monitoring, coordination within and between sites, reporting, fiscal oversight, and assuring performance outcomes.
- **Site Director** – The Site Director is to be responsible for program oversight at the site level; for monitoring, coordinate between partners, reporting, and fiscal oversight; and for assuring performance outcomes.
- **Case Managers** – VETEC case managers are to be the primary points of contact for individuals interested in the program. Their responsibilities are to include communicating with prospective program applicants prior to the application process; confirming VETEC eligibility; reviewing, accepting, and submitting VETEC applications; and entering applicant data into the Participant Tracking System (PTS).
- **Site Partners** – The VETEC program model does not define any required partner involvement in the intake process (partners are primarily involved in delivering program services); however, sites are free to seek partners' assistance in identifying and recruiting prospective applicants.

⁷ Findings discussed are based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with VETEC senior staff, and reviews of grant materials, including the VETEC project proposal submitted to DOL.

While each of the key players has a specific role within the project model, an effective intake process requires all parties to: 1) be aware of, not only their own roles and responsibilities, but also those of the other key players; and 2) work interdependently across the many aspects of the program. Coordinating in this way involves an effective communication plan that not only specifies the frequency and modes by which staff and partners will communicate, but also provides flexibility for the players to open their own channels of communication.

2.2 Communication Processes

The program model specifies that the VETEC Project Director implement an effective and flexible communication plan by requiring each site to conduct a monthly in-person meeting. During this meeting, sites are to communicate all programmatic issues or challenges directly to the VETEC Project Director. The VETEC Project Director attends information sessions, networking events, and orientations at each site.

The program model also requires each site to have a monthly meeting with its partners to discuss outreach activities, challenges, and any other program issues; and to include the VETEC Project Director in all monthly meetings with partners.⁸ All communications across sites – which can occur in any number of ways, including email, phone, or during the in-person monthly meetings – are to be facilitated through the VETEC Project Director. The next section discusses the program model’s intake process and the specific activities staff members are intended to conduct.

2.3 The VETEC Model’s Intake Process

The VETEC model’s intake process involves outreach, recruitment, the information session, and post-information session activities. All these activities are to be conducted as a series of distinct steps:

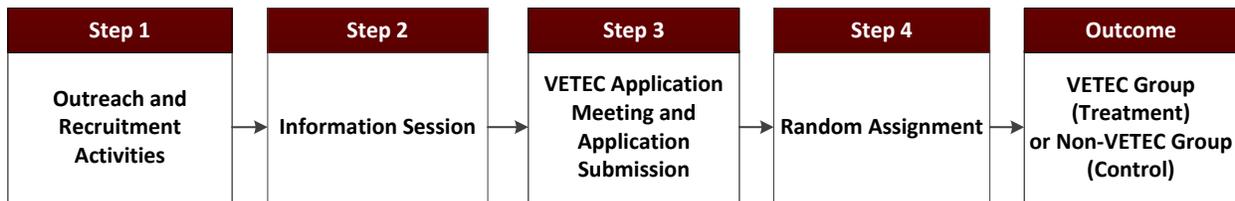
- 1) **Step 1: Outreach and Recruitment Activities:** Sites are to work with local institutions to identify and target WIA-eligible job seekers, age 18 years and over, using a variety of print and non-print materials.
- 2) **Step 2: Information Session:** The information session is to apprise all prospective applicants of the VETEC program, including the eligibility requirements, level of effort required from participants and random assignment.
- 3) **Step 3: VETEC Application Meeting and Application Submission:** Once an applicant has been determined eligible for the program, s/he is to schedule an application appointment with a case manager to apply for the program.

⁸ Previously, the VETEC project model did not explicitly specify the frequency and channels of communication between partners and across sites. Overtime, the model has evolved and communication should now be occurring as specified here.

- 4) **Step 4 and Step 5: Random Assignment to VETEC (Treatment) or Non-VETEC (Control) Group:** Case managers are to enter eligible applicants into the PTS for random assignment immediately following submission of their application. After receiving notification that an applicant’s information has been entered into the PTS, IMPAQ randomly assigns an individual to either the treatment or the control group the same day.

These steps are shown in Exhibit 5 and described in detail below.

Exhibit 5: VETEC Model Intake Process



2.3.1 Outreach and Recruitment

Each site is to engage in a planned, strategic effort to target and recruit prospective program applicants. In most cases, this will be carried out by the site’s American Job Centers (AJCs). However, sites are not prevented from coordinating with partner organizations that provide similar and ancillary employment services. Each outreach and recruitment strategy is to include the following activities:

- All sites are to communicate with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to identify and recruit prospective participants. The VEC is a principal contact point for both unemployed jobseekers and veterans – a key VETEC target population. The VEC is to post VETEC information on its website, as well recruit individuals at VEC offices.
- In addition to identifying prospective applicants through the VEC, sites are to target those individuals already in their Virtual One-Stop (VOS) and WIA data management systems – because people who are already attached to the workforce system and are using or have previously used WIA services are more likely to be VETEC-eligible. For similar reasons, sites are to reach out to customers who come into the AJC of their own accord to use employment services.⁹

To reach those individuals not already served by the VEC or captured in VOS, sites are to use a variety of print and non-print advertising materials that include but are not limited to:

⁹ Virtual One-Stop is a for purchase workforce development software which captures information on employers, clients and others in a region. It can be used as a management information system for a local region.

- Email blasts
- Letters
- Advertisements in local magazines, newspapers, and newsletters
- Online advertisements
- Attending community events, and local employment and entrepreneurial events (e.g., job fairs).

These materials are to include a basic overview of the program, as well as registration information and a contact phone number, email, and a program website link.

Individuals interested in applying are to register for an information session either online or by telephone, and sites are to maintain a list of such individuals in case contact is required before the session. Sites are free to reach out to registrants to confirm registration and the session's time and place. However, contact with these individuals prior to the session is not required, and individuals who attend an information session without registering are not to be turned away; walk-ins are welcome.

2.3.2 Information Session

The information session, which is obligatory for all applicants, is to last no more than one hour and cover the following:

- VETEC program overview that clearly identifies the three program sites
- Discussion of eligibility, program services, and level of effort required of participants
- VETEC informational video
- Brief overview of the evaluation component, including random assignment
- Veterans' priority of service. It is to be clearly noted that veterans are not part of random selection and will be enrolled in the program as long as they meet all other criteria.

The goal of the information session is to provide enough information to: 1) allow prospective applicants to make an informed decision on whether or not to apply and 2) encourage them to spread awareness about the program among friends and family. Hence, most of the information session is to be devoted to providing a program overview – including a discussion of the purpose of VETEC, the services it provides, and what will be required of participants. Detailed discussions outside this scope are not included on the grounds that they may confuse participants in a way that will negatively affect their decision to apply.

Following the information session, attendees are to be given the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and meet individually with case managers. If the attendee has decided to apply, s/he is to schedule a separate application appointment with a case manager. If the individual has brought his/her eligibility documents, case managers are free to conduct the eligibility

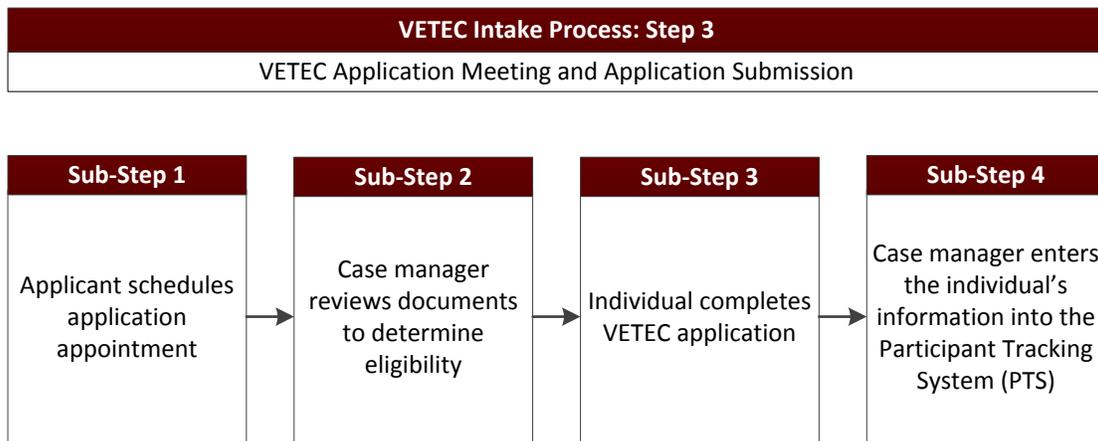
screening immediately after the information session. However, because the information session is open to anyone, eligibility determination is not required at that time, and can be conducted during the separate application appointment.

2.3.3 Post-Information Session and Application

After the information session, interested applicants are to schedule an application appointment with a case manager. If the applicant’s eligibility was not determined during the information session, case managers are to notify them, at the time they make their appointment, of the documents required to verify eligibility. Applicants can be provided information about eligibility documents prior to attending the information session based on the discretion of the site. If applicants are not given this information before the information session, they are to be informed about the documents required for determining eligibility before they arrive for their application appointment. The case manager is to review these documents at the application appointment and, if the applicant is determined eligible, continue with the VETEC application process.

After an individual has completed and submitted the VETEC application, the case worker is to enter the applicant’s information into the PTS. Once the information has been uploaded, IMPAQ receives notification that s/he is ready to be randomly assigned. IMPAQ conducts the random assignment the same day and assigns the individual to either the treatment or the control group. Only those individuals assigned to the treatment group receive VETEC program services. Individuals are to be notified by the case worker of the random assignment outcome within 10 days from the date they submitted their application. Exhibit 6 illustrates the activities followed during and after step 3 of the VETEC intake process (as shown in Exhibit 5 above).

Exhibit 6: VETEC Model Application Process



Once an individual has been assigned to the treatment group, s/he will schedule an appointment with a case manager to complete the WIA orientation process and submit a WIA application and any necessary WIA assessments, at which point s/he will be entered into Virtual One-Stop (VOS). This process will vary depending on the individual’s WIA history. Participants

already enrolled in WIA prior to VETEC will not need to re-submit WIA application materials and complete assessments as long as they completed both within the last year. However, they will be re-entered into VOS, so their WIA intake date is updated and their WIA program duration extended.

It is important to stress here that only those individuals who are enrolled in the VETEC program (i.e., the treatment group) are required to be dual-enrolled in both WIA and VETEC. Importantly, this means the VETEC intake process does not include submission of a WIA application nor an individual to be entered into VOS until after step 5.

Implementing the application procedures in the specified manner is extremely important, as the success of the VETEC program is dependent upon participating sites' ability to recruit individuals. The specified VETEC intake procedures have proven successful at enrolling program participants in prior program demonstrations, and they should serve as the baseline for all site implementation activities. In the next three chapters, we examine the extent to which this is occurring, and take a detailed look at each site's current implementation strategies.

3. ENOVATE

The VETEC program operates under the name Employing Northern Virginia Through Entrepreneurship (ENOVATE) in the Fairfax region of Virginia. ENOVATE serves LWIA#11, which includes:

- Fairfax County
- Loudoun County
- Prince William County
- City of Fairfax
- City of Falls Church
- City of Manassas
- City of Manassas Park.

This chapter documents the ENOVATE recruitment, outreach, and intake activities. Section 3.1 describes the local labor market context of this region. Section 3.2 presents the key players and site partners, their respective roles and responsibilities, and communication among them. Section 3.3 describes the program recruitment, outreach, and intake activities. Section 3.4 summarizes the chapter findings.

3.1 ENOVATE Local Labor Market Context

Northern Virginia was characterized in a Forbes article in 2009 as “Innovation Central” and is recognized as one of the strongest local economies and labor markets in the nation.¹⁰ In 2011, while the national unemployment rate averaged 8.1% and Virginia as a whole averaged 6.4%, this region enjoyed a relative low rate of 4.8%.¹¹ Even so, for the fiscal year that ended in June 2012, five Northern Virginia SkillSource Centers had nearly 90,000 adult job seeker visits, an increase of 170% since 2007 – providing clear evidence that efforts to expand workforce services to tens of thousands of job seekers remain critically important.¹² Exhibit 7 presents labor market statistics for this region.

Conversations with site staff reveal that local labor market conditions play an important role in strategizing ENOVATE’s recruitment and outreach activities. “Low unemployment rate,” “Connected to federal government,” “Non-trivial veteran population,” “Veterans are on average of higher skill” are some of their characterizations of the Northern Virginia labor market as described by site staff– descriptions that match well with the region’s official labor market data as described above.

¹⁰ Susan Burnell, 2009, “Northern Virginia Innovating Technology’s Future”, ForbesCustom.Com

¹¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*.

¹² SkillSource Group, 2012, *Annual Report*.

Exhibit 7: Local Labor Market Conditions for Northern Virginia

	LWIA#11	Veterans	Non-Veterans
Population of Area	1,881,917	181,373	1,700,545
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	2.5%	5.0%
Labor Force Participation Rate	57.7%	62.3%	57.2%
Self-employed (% of labor force)	105,700 (9.7%)	7,487 (6.6%)	98,213 (10.1%)
Poverty Rate	6.8%		
# of Small Businesses (<500 Employees)	38,606		
# Employed by Small Businesses (% of all employed)	380,926 (36.8%)		
Total Earnings by Small Business Employees	\$21,039,842		

Source: American Community Survey, 2011; U.S. Census, SAIPE 2011; U.S. Census 2010 County Business Patterns

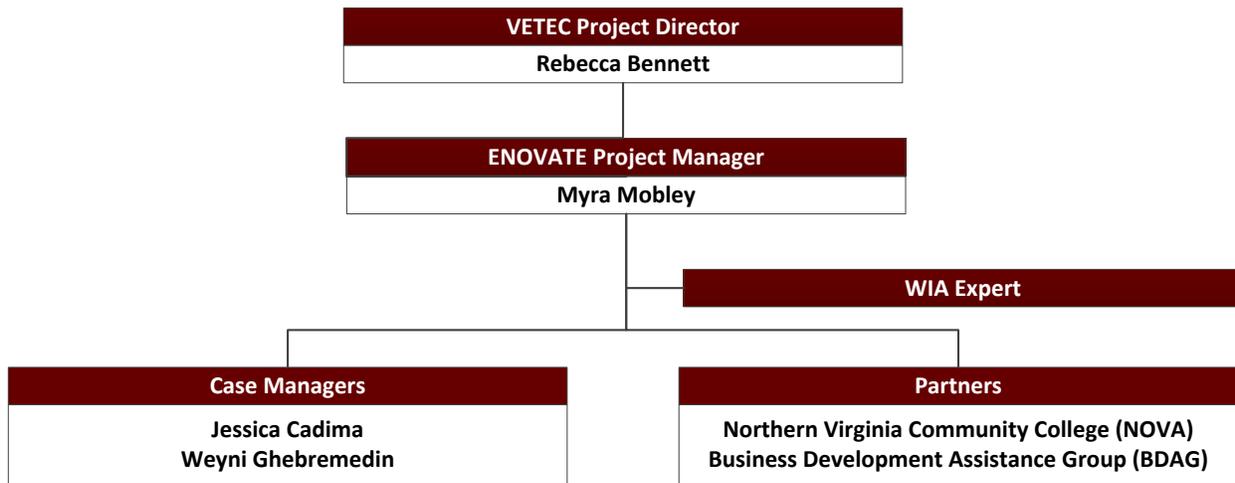
Serving veterans is an ENOVATE priority, as many of them have transferable skills gained from their active duty but have been unable to find jobs since returning home. Northern Virginia veterans make up about 20% of the total veteran population in Virginia, around 11,200 of whom are veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns. U.S. Census Bureau 2010 data show that both Fairfax and Prince William counties have a higher percentage of residents who are veterans than the U.S. overall average.

3.2 Key Players

Implementation of the ENOVATE project is an orchestrated effort by dedicated staff members and site partners (Exhibit 8):

- **VE TEC Project Director.** The VETEC Director is responsible for overall program oversight and monitoring, coordination within and between sites, reporting, fiscal oversight, and assuring performance outcomes.
- **Project Manager.** The ENOVATE project manager (referred to as Site Director in the VETEC model) is responsible for managing and providing overall guidance to the case managers and overseeing all aspects of project implementation and operations. Under the guidance of the VETEC director, the project manager plays a crucial role in recruiting potential participants who meet ENOVATE’s eligibility requirements, and is also involved in its outreach and recruitment activities.
- **Case Managers.** Case managers conduct most outreach and recruitment activities and respond to all email and phone inquiries from potential applicants. They conduct the information sessions and post-information session meetings.
- **WIA Expert.** Although not a formal member of the ENOVATE implementation team, the WIA expert is regularly consulted by the project manager and case managers for assistance on issues related to program eligibility.
- **Site Partners.** Site partners include Business Development Group (BDAG) and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), which provide training for the program.

Exhibit 8: ENOVATE Organizational Chart¹³



3.3 Communication Processes

Communication channels across ENOVATE implementation players, shown in Exhibit 9, are fairly open and smooth. There is frequent communication between the VETEC Project Director and the project manager regarding outreach activities. The project manager communicates with case managers daily through meetings, phone calls, and emails regarding recruitment and the information session. Monthly staff meetings include the training service provider partners and discuss the current program situation and future steps for outreach activities. There is no regular communication between ENOVATE and the other two VETEC sites, except for the quarterly VETEC-wide meeting.

¹³ Exhibit 8 reflects ENOVATE organizational hierarchy as of October 2013.

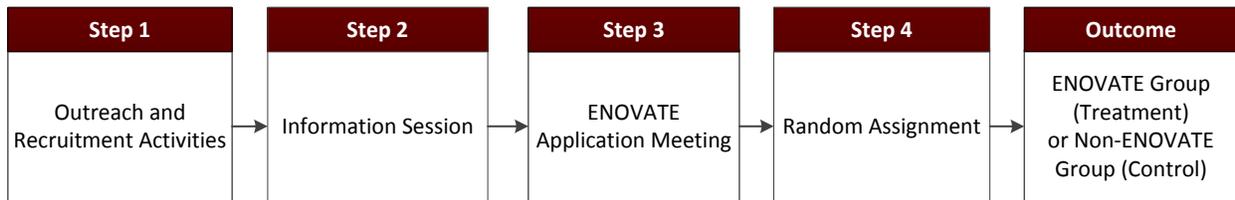
Exhibit 9: Communication across ENOVATE Key Players

VETEC, ENOVATE and Other Region's Key Players							
ENOVATE Key Players		VETEC Project Director	Enovate Project Manager	Case Managers	BDAG	NOVA	Other VETEC Sites
	Enovate Project Manager	Monthly ENOVATE meeting and frequent mail and phone conversations		Daily communication by email, phone, and in-person	Monthly ENOVATE meeting, frequent communication to share information about outreach and recruitment	Monthly ENOVATE meeting	Quarterly VETEC meeting and occasional email and phone conversations
	Case Managers	Monthly ENOVATE meeting	Daily communication by email, phone, and in-person		Monthly ENOVATE meeting, frequent communication to share information about outreach and recruitment		No formal communication channels
	BDAG	Quarterly VETEC and monthly ENOVATE meeting	Monthly ENOVATE meeting, frequent communication to share information about outreach and recruitment	Monthly ENOVATE meeting, frequent communication to share information about outreach and recruitment		Not clear from available data	
	NOVA	Quarterly VETEC and monthly ENOVATE meeting	Monthly ENOVATE meeting		Not clear from available data		

3.4 Program Activities

The recruitment and intake activities involved in the operation of the ENOVATE program include recruitment and outreach, a program information session, and post-information session activities. Exhibit 10 highlights ENOVATE’s intake process.

Exhibit 10: ENOVATE Intake Process



3.4.1 Outreach and Recruitment

ENOVATE outreach activities consist of distributing print materials such as brochures and information session flyers, on-line information dissemination, and coordination with other programs that serve WIA adults and dislocated workers. Specific outreach activities include:

- **Marketing Materials.** ENOVATE brochures provide a program overview, detailed eligibility requirements, and descriptions of services. Brochures are printed in five languages (English, Arabic, Korean, Vietnamese, and Spanish) and contain VETEC contact information, an email and phone number for case managers, and the program website. In addition to brochures, ENOVATE flyers were also developed, which include similar program information as well as the schedule and locations of information sessions.
- **Outreach via VEC.** When individuals file for their initial or weekly/continued claims for unemployment insurance (UI), VEC staff tell them about the ENOVATE program and provide them with program brochures and the information session schedule.
- **Outreach via AJCs.** AJCs are important outreach portals for ENOVATE. Project staff makes every effort to ensure that all programs serving WIA adults and dislocated job seekers are notified of ENOVATE and all WIA case managers are informed about the program.
- **Outreach via Emails.** With VEC help, the project manager was able to send outreach emails to about 6,000 VOS registrants, all of them initial UI claimants during 2012 and 2013. These emails contained information on the ENOVATE website and case managers’ names, phone numbers, and email addresses should the individual want further information.
- **Outreach via Brochures/Flyers.** Case managers distribute brochures and flyers at targeted locations and events that might draw potential eligible participants, such as job fairs and public libraries. They also put flyers and brochures in high traffic areas, such as grocery stores, within the Northern Virginia region.

- **Outreach via Social Media.** Quick Response code and the ENOVATE Facebook and Twitter pages are managed by ENOVATE case managers to take advantage of modern mobile technology and social networks to spread word about the VETEC program.

After potential participants register for the information session through phone or the ENOVATE website, they receive an information session confirmation email. This email contains the time and location of the registered information session, ENOVATE website link, and case managers' phone numbers and email addresses. The website provides the list of eligibility documents to bring to the information session. Other than a confirmation email, there is either no or only limited contact between program staff and potential participants before the information session.

3.4.2 Information Session

All potential participants are required to attend an information session before they can be enrolled into the program. These sessions are held monthly in six locations across the Northern Virginia region, including five AJCs and the VEC location in Alexandria. Timing of the sessions varies across locations to accommodate job seekers' schedules and transportation needs.

All attendees fill out the sign-in sheet before the session starts to provide their name, email address, phone number, veteran status, and means through which they learned about ENOVATE. At the beginning of the session, each attendee is provided with a folder of documents, which includes a page of "Is Entrepreneurship for You" material taken from the Small Business Association (SBA) website, PowerPoint slides to go with a live presentation at the session (see further below), a program eligibility checklist, and a business resource guide.¹⁴

The information session consists of two parts. The first part, which lasts about 45 minutes, shows the VETEC information video followed by live PowerPoint presentation by one of the two case managers. A typical PowerPoint presentation covers the following topics:

- ENOVATE program overview
- Characteristics of a successful entrepreneur
- Eligibility requirements in general, and for adults and dislocated workers in specifically
- List of required eligibility documents
- Application process
- Random selection process and IMPAQ evaluation study
- Program process and services delivered through ENOVATE
- Contact information for ENOVATE case managers.

¹⁴ Documents included in the information session folder are included in Appendix B.

3.4.3 One-on-one Session

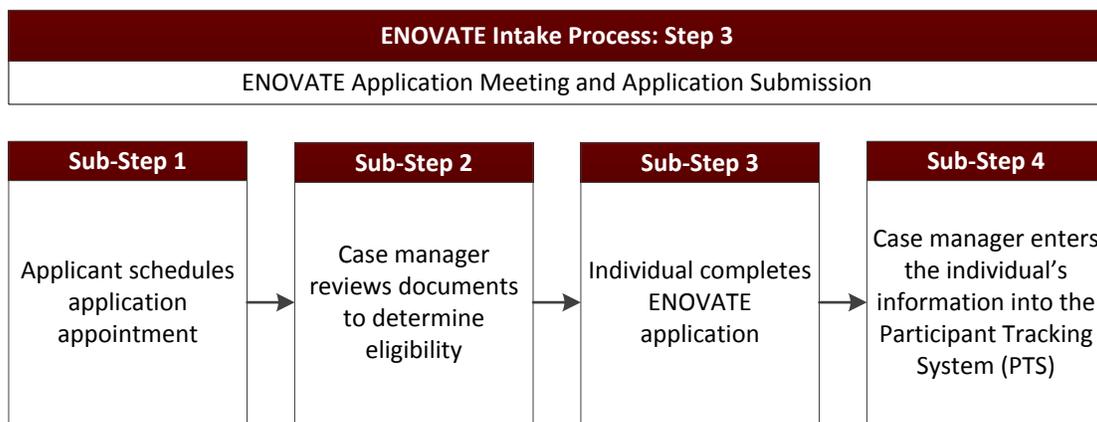
During the second half of the information session, case managers meet with attendees one-on-one – to provide further program information, conduct initial VETEC eligibility screening, and, if the attendee is eligible, make an appointment to complete the application submission process. To determine WIA/VETEC eligibility, case managers make sure that potential participants provide the following documents: general eligibility documents, dislocated worker qualifying documents or eligible adults qualifying documents, and a resume.¹⁵ Case managers also assist potential participants, if necessary, with how to obtain such documents.

Since veterans are not subject to random assignment, they can enroll in VETEC as long as they meet WIA eligibility requirements. This is not announced during the PowerPoint presentation, however, but communicated individually with veteran job seekers during the one-on-one part of the information session.

3.4.4 Post-Information Session

The application process after conclusion of the information session (i.e., during step 3 of Exhibit 9) is shown in Exhibit 11. After scheduling an application appointment meeting during the information session, case managers follow up by calling or emailing the potential participants to remind them of the appointment. During the application meeting, eligibility documents are checked and if the individual is eligible, the VETEC application form is filled out with the help of case managers. The case managers then enter potential participants into the PTS. They also let them know they will receive a letter within 10 business days informing them of the results of their random assignment.

Exhibit 11: ENOVATE Application Process



¹⁵ ENOVATE program eligibility checklist with details of required documents is included in Appendix B.

There is no difference in the ENOVATE application process based on an individual's WIA history until after random assignment. If they are already WIA-enrolled, individuals assigned to the treatment group are re-entered into VOS. They do not need to file a WIA application or complete WIA assessments as long as they completed both in the last year. Treatment individuals, who have not been WIA-enrolled prior to VETEC, submit a WIA application and any necessary WIA assessments and are entered into VOS.

3.5 Summary

In summary, ENOVATE staff and partners have well-defined roles and responsibilities. Communication occurs frequently enough to keep the team apprised of all recruitment and intake activities and any developments in the intake process. The ENOVATE team is working with VEC and AJCs for the program's outreach and recruitment activities. Once individuals express an interest in the program, they attend an information session that includes sufficient information on VETEC to inform their decision to apply. Should they decide to apply, they schedule an appointment to have their eligibility determined and, if eligible, apply to the program. Only those individuals assigned to the treatment group receive a WIA application and WIA assessments.

4. GREATER RICHMOND GATE

In the Greater Richmond region of Virginia, the VETEC program operates as Great Richmond (GR) GATE. GR GATE serves LWIA#9, which includes:

- City of Richmond
- Charles City County
- Chesterfield County
- Goochland County
- Hanover County
- Henrico County
- New Kent County
- Powhatan County.

This chapter documents the GR GATE recruitment, outreach, and intake activities. Section 4.1 gives a description of local labor market conditions. Section 4.2 provides information on key players and partners, their respective roles and responsibilities; while Section 4.3 discusses the communication among them. Section 4.4 details the program activities related to recruitment, outreach, and intake. Section 4.5 summarizes the chapter findings.

4.1 Local Labor Market Context

During the site visit, the program staff described this area labor market with such characteristics as “Low unemployment rate,” “Highly educated,” “Job loss among white collar workers,” and “Large veteran population.” Exhibit 12 provides additional information about the labor market conditions in this region.

Exhibit 12: Local Labor Market Conditions for Richmond Region

	LWIA#9	Veterans	Non-Veterans
Population of Area	1,131,543	97,164	1,034,379
Unemployment Rate	7.5%	4.2%	7.8%
Labor Force Participation Rate	66.9%	57.9%	68.0%
Self-employed (% of labor force)	55,227 (7.3%)	6,841 (12.1%)	47,386 (6.7%)
Poverty Rate	12.0%		
# of Small Businesses (<500 Employees)	20,407		
# Employed by Small Businesses (% of all employed)	197,178 (28.2%)		
Total Earnings by Small Business Employees	\$7,503,017		

Source: American Community Survey, 2011; U.S. Census, SAIPE 2011; U.S. Census 2010 County Business Patterns

The Greater Richmond region is home to about 1.13 million Virginians. In 2011, the unemployment rate in greater Richmond was 7.5%, higher than that of the Commonwealth overall, at 6.4%, but still below the unemployment rate for the country, at 8.1%. In 2011, this

workforce area provided services for almost 18,000 WIA participants and had over 16,000 WIA exiters – numbers that emphasize the need to provide workforce services on an ongoing basis.

This region has a large veteran population, as emphasized during on-site interviews, a potential reason for which is the nearby location of Dahlgren Naval Surface Warfare Center. One of the priorities of the GR GATE program, as for VETEC generally, is to serve veterans. Many veterans have transferable skills gained from their active duty but have been unable to find jobs since returning home. Outreach and marketing activities for GR GATE make an extra effort to target veterans and provide them information about the program.

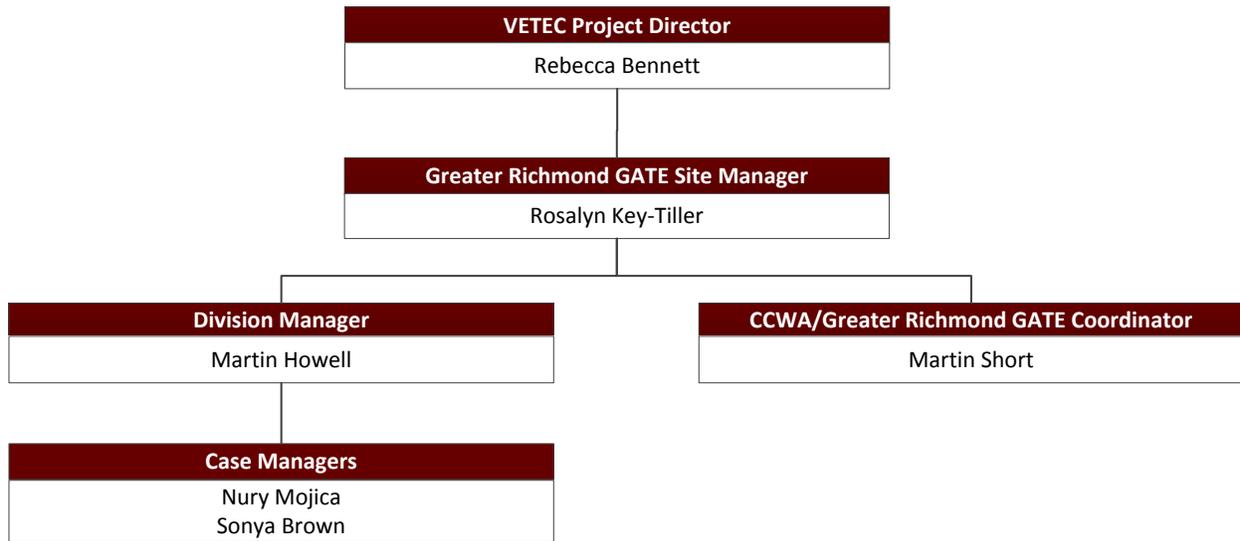
4.2 Key Players

Exhibit 13 shows the organizational structure for the GR GATE program. The responsibilities of each key player are as follows:

- **VETEC Project Director.** The VETEC Project Director is responsible for overall program oversight and monitoring; coordination within and among sites; reporting; fiscal oversight; and assuring performance outcomes.
- **Site Manager.** The site manager (referred to as Site Director in the VETEC model) is responsible for providing overall oversight to the GR GATE program.
- **Case Managers.** Case managers conduct some outreach and recruitment activities for the program and respond to all email and phone inquiries from potential applicants. They deliver the latter part of the presentation during the information session and conduct post-information session meetings.
- **Division Manager.** The three GR GATE locations are under the supervision of a division manager, who is responsible for managing and providing overall guidance to case managers with respect to the WIA portion of the GR GATE program and GR GATE outreach.¹⁶
- **Site Partners.** GR GATE program has Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA), the entrepreneurial training service provider as partner. CCWA employs the GR GATE Coordinator, who manages GR GATE marketing efforts to create awareness about the program, promote it, and recruit participants.

¹⁶ Downtown Richmond Resource Workforce Center, Eastern Henrico Resource Workforce Center, and Chesterfield Resource Workforce Center

Exhibit 13: GR GATE Organization Chart¹⁷



4.3 Communication Processes

Exhibit 14 describes the communication among different partners involved in GR GATE. Key players in the program communicate via email, phone, and in-person meetings. There is frequent communication between the overall VETEC leadership and site director regarding the program. The site manager and division manager communicate via emails and monthly meetings regarding the general direction of the program. The division manager is in communication with case managers several times a day regarding all aspects of the program. There is one-way communication from CCWA/GR GATE to case managers and the division manager about recruitment and outreach activities. Other than the quarterly VETEC-wide meeting, there is no regular communication between GR GATE and the other two VETEC sites.

¹⁷ Exhibit 13 reflects GR GATE organizational hierarchy as of October 2013.

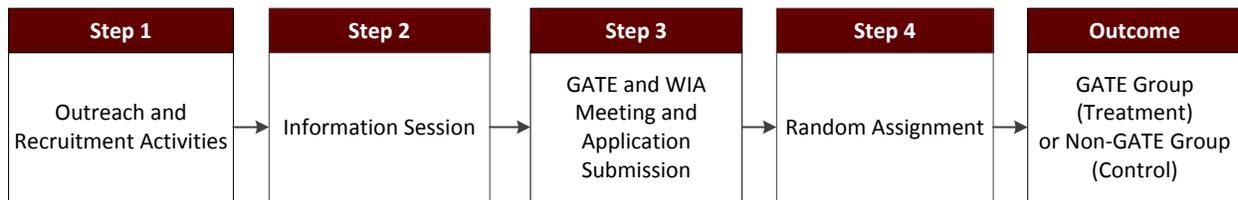
Exhibit 14: Communication between GR GATE Key Players

VETEC, GR GATE and Other Region's Key Players							
GR GATE Key Players		VETEC Project Director	Site Director	Division Manager	Case Manager	CCWA	Other VETEC Sites
	Site Director	Monthly meeting and frequent mail and phone conversations		Daily communication by email; monthly in-person meeting	Most communication occurs through division manager	Limited communication	Quarterly VETEC meeting and occasional email and phone conversations
	Division Manager	Quarterly VETEC meeting	Daily communication by email; monthly in-person meeting		Communicate daily face-to-face, by phone and email	Communicate weekly via email; monthly in-person meeting	No formal communication
	Case Manager	Quarterly VETEC meeting	Most communication occurs through division manager	Communicate daily face-to-face, by phone and email		One-way communication from CCWA; no formal communication about marketing and outreach activities	No formal communication
	CCWA	Quarterly VETEC meeting	Limited communication	Communicate weekly via email; monthly in-person meeting	One-way communication from CCWA; no formal communication about marketing and outreach activities		

4.4 Program Activities

The GR GATE intake process involves all outreach and recruitment, the information session including the one-on-one session, the post-information session, and intake activities – a process that is shown in Exhibit 15 and detailed below.

Exhibit 15: Greater Richmond GATE Intake Process



4.4.1 Outreach and Recruitment

Outreach and marketing activities for GR GATE are primarily undertaken by site partner CCWA. Case managers also do some 'boots-on-the-ground' outreach, such as attending local events to promote the program. CCWA uses a wide variety of techniques to create awareness about the GATE program and recruit participants. Specific activities include:

- **Marketing Materials.** Marketing materials are developed by a public relations firm and approved by site partner CCWA.
- **Outreach for Veterans.** In-person presentations are made at veteran organizations and veteran job fairs.¹⁸ Presentations are also made at VEC and job incubators.
- **Outreach via Print and Non-print Media.** CCWA distributes pamphlets, brochures, bus placards, and sends mass emails. The program is also described via advertisements in the local newspaper, magazines, and radio spots, and on billboards. The goal of these ads is to drive people to the GR GATE website (which is maintained by CCWA), where descriptions of the GR GATE program are posted.
- **Outreach via Social Media.** Social media such as Twitter and Facebook are also used to raise awareness about the program.

Case managers supplement the outreach and marketing efforts of CCWA through the following activities:

- **Outreach via VEC.** Case managers reach out to local VEC offices, promote the GR GATE program to other case managers in the region, and make presentations to inform them about the program.
- **Outreach via American Job Centers.** Case managers make presentations to other case managers serving WIA adults and dislocated job seekers to inform them about GR GATE.
- **Outreach via Local Events.** Case managers attend events such as career fairs, entrepreneurship career fairs, and church events, and reach out to technical associations.

4.4.2 Information Session

The purpose of information session is to provide an overview of the VETEC program. Interested individuals interested can register for an information session online or by contacting case managers via email or phone. They can also attend the session without registering beforehand, though this is not very common.

¹⁸ The GR GATE coordinator identified incubators, VEC, veteran organizations, and veteran job fairs as good places to advertise the GR GATE program. The GR GATE coordinator focused on finding stakeholders that work with individuals who are unemployed and/or looking to start their own business.

After an individual registers for an information session, case managers get in touch with potential attendee via phone or email to let them know what to expect at the session, make them aware of VETEC eligibility requirements, and provide them with a list of documents they should bring to the session if possible. CCWA IT staff extracts the list of registered individuals and sends it to the GR GATE coordinator, who in turn sends it to the case managers to enable them to contact registered individuals before the information session.

Since June 2013, information sessions have been held every Tuesday at one of the three program locations, with each location hosting a session once every three weeks. The GR GATE coordinator and case managers conduct the information sessions together. Each lasts about an hour and a half. The first hour, 10:30 am to 11:30 am, is dedicated to providing information about program by the GR GATE coordinator and case managers. The last 30 minutes are used for checking eligibility of interested attendees and completing paperwork.

The GR GATE coordinator starts the information session with a video presentation about the VETEC program. After this video presentation, the coordinator continues with his presentation, which covers the following topics:

- Overview of the VETEC program
- Eligibility criteria for program participation and random assignment
- Desirable characteristics of individuals wanting to start their own business
- Google success story as an example of a successful business that started as a partnership
- Steps to take to start a new business
- What the GR GATE program offers.

The GR GATE coordinator's entire presentation including the video segment takes about 40 minutes and is followed by a 20 minute presentation by the case manager. The main components of this presentation are:

- What is the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)?
- Types of customized/intensive services offered to eligible individuals
- Documents needed for determining VETEC eligibility
- Flow chart of the GR GATE process detailing each step – starting from information session until program graduation
- Frequently asked questions – program length, cost, expectations, and requirements.

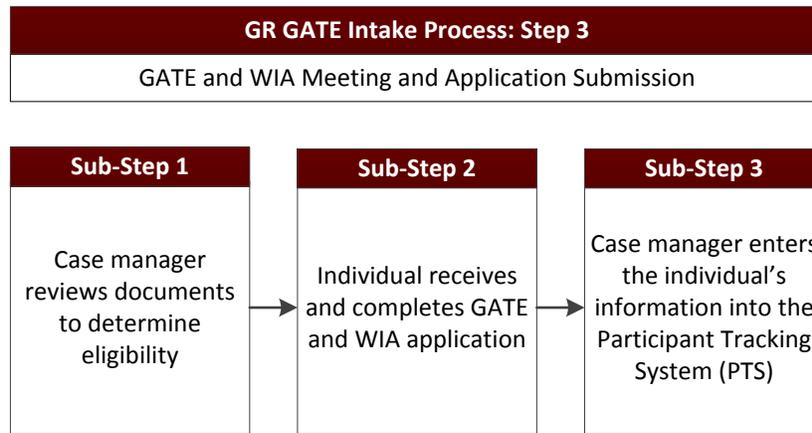
4.4.3 One-on-one Session

After the presentations by the coordinator and case managers, attendees interested in participating in the program have a one-on-one session with a case manager the same day. During this session, the case manager covers program requirements; makes sure participants

are aware of the effort and commitment level involved in program participation; conducts eligibility screening; and completes applications for eligible potential participants. Case managers can accept the GR GATE application for interested individuals the same day as the information session if they have all the necessary documents and are eligible.

Exhibit 16 shows what follows during and after the step 3 of Exhibit 15, which includes some differences in the application submission process depending on WIA enrollment. Individuals not enrolled in WIA prior to GR GATE need to complete all WIA core-service documentation before filling out the GR GATE application. After they submit both WIA and GR GATE applications, they are then entered into the PTS. It is unclear at what point individuals are entered into VOS. When an individual’s information has been uploaded on PTS, IMPAQ randomly assigns the individual to either the treatment or control group. Individuals enrolled in WIA prior to GR GATE do not submit a WIA application again and are not reentered in VOS; otherwise they follow the process shown in Exhibit 16.

Exhibit 16: GR GATE Application Submission Process



4.4.4 Post-Information Session

In the event that an individual interested in participating in GR GATE does not have the necessary documentation for determining eligibility, s/he makes an appointment with the case manager to bring the documents and finish the application submission process described above at a later date. All applicants who need to complete WIA assessments come back at a later date. In certain cases, WIA assessments are completed before an individual is assigned to the treatment group. Such assessments include Career Readiness Certification (CRC), Career Scope, and Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE). Individuals with a bachelor’s degree are exempt from completing CRC. All participants are dual enrolled in WIA and the GR GATE program but are not dual managed. That is, once an individual who was enrolled in WIA prior to GR GATE is enrolled in the GR GATE program, his/her case is transferred to the GR GATE case manager.

4.5 Summary

GR GATE project staff and partners understand their roles and responsibilities. In addition to the site director, the region employs a division manager through whom all communication between the site director and case managers is facilitated. GR GATE works with its partner CCWA to carry out its outreach and recruitment strategy, but the two do not formally communicate regarding specific recruitment activities or developments in the outreach process. The GR GATE information session includes program and application information, and case managers conduct one-on-one sessions with interested applicants immediately following the presentation. WIA-enrolled individuals only need to complete a GR GATE application, whereas those who are not already enrolled in WIA also complete a WIA application when they apply for the GR GATE program.

5. LAUNCH HAMPTON ROADS

Launch Hampton Roads serves LWIA#16, which includes:

- Isle of Wight County
- Southampton County
- City of Chesapeake
- City of Franklin
- City of Norfolk
- City of Portsmouth
- City of Suffolk
- City of Virginia Beach.

This chapter documents the recruitment, outreach, and intake operations of Launch Hampton Roads. Section 5.1 describes the local labor market context of this region. Section 5.2 presenting key players and partners, their respective roles and responsibilities. Section 5.3 describes the communication among the key players. Section 5.4 reports the program activities on recruitment, outreach, and intake. Section 5.5 summarizes the chapter findings.

5.1 Local Labor Market Context

Launch Hampton Roads is one of 15 local workforce Boards in the Commonwealth of Virginia, serving over 1.1 million residents and thousands of businesses in Isle of Wight and Southampton counties and cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

In 2011, this region's unemployment rate was 7.1%, lower than the national unemployment rate at 8.1% and somewhat higher than that of the Commonwealth overall, at 6.4%.¹⁹ In the same year, this workforce area provided services to almost 28,000 WIA participants and had over 25,000 WIA exiters – clear evidence that efforts to provide workforce services to job seekers remain critically important in the region. Exhibit 17 provides additional information on labor market conditions in this region.

Serving veterans is a program priority, as many of them have transferable skills gained from their active duty but have been unable to find jobs since returning home. The Hampton Roads region has a large veteran population, at least in part because of the Norfolk Naval Base.

¹⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*.

Exhibit 17: Local Labor Market Conditions for Hampton Roads Region

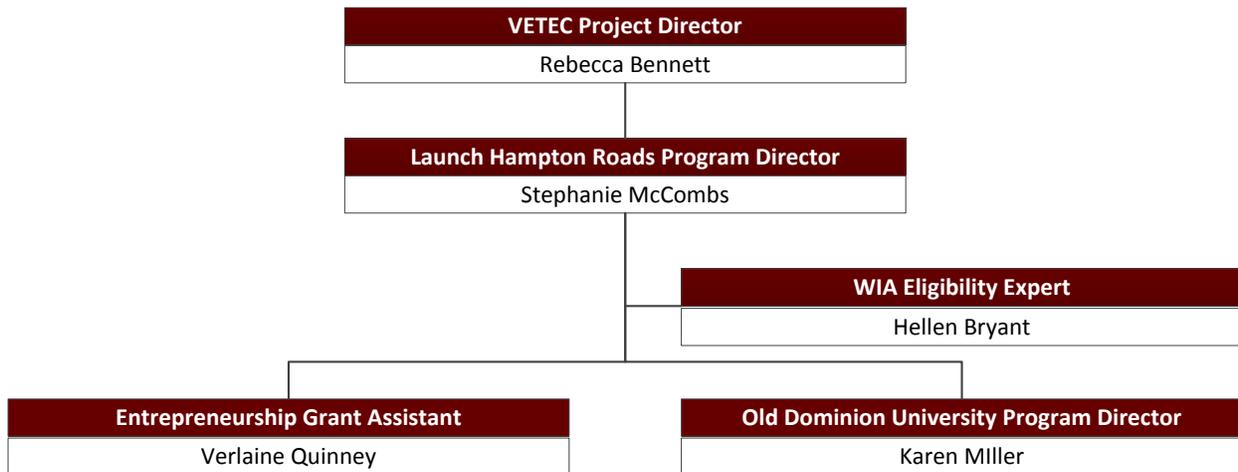
	LWIA #16	Veterans	Non-Veterans
Population of Area	1,107,673	197,280	910,393
Unemployment Rate	7.1%	4.8%	7.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	67.8%	69.1%	67.6%
Self-employed (% of labor force)	48,639 (6.5%)	8,558 (6.3%)	40,081 (6.5%)
Poverty Rate	12.6%		
# of Small Businesses (Less Than 500 Employees)	19,910		
# Employed by Small Businesses (% of all employed)	198,627 (28.5%)		
Total Earnings by Small Business Employees	\$6,759,281		

Source: American Community Survey, 2011; U.S. Census, SAIPE 2011; U.S. Census 2010 County Business Patterns

5.2 Key Players

Exhibit 18 shows the key players involved in the implementation of Launch Hampton Roads, as described further below.

Exhibit 18: Launch Hampton Roads Organizational Chart²⁰



- **VETEC Project Director.** The VETEC Project Director is responsible for overall program oversight and monitoring, coordination between the multiple actors, reporting, fiscal oversight, and assuring performance outcomes.
- **Project Director/Entrepreneurship Grant Coordinator.** The project director/entrepreneurship grant coordinator (referred to as Site Director in the VETEC model) is responsible for managing and providing overall guidance to the Entrepreneurship Grant

²⁰ Exhibit 18 reflects Hampton Roads organizational hierarchy as of November 2013.

Assistant and overseeing all aspects of project implementation. The person holding this position also conducts most of the outreach and recruitment activities, organizes and conducts the information sessions, meets program applicants, and coordinates with the training partner (see further below) regarding issues related to training service delivery.

- **Entrepreneurship Grant Assistant.** The role of case manager as defined in the VETEC proposal is not officially set up in the Launch Hampton Roads site. The Entrepreneurship Grant Assistant assists in most outreach and recruitment activities and responds to all email and phone inquiries from potential applicants. The entrepreneurship grant assistant is also gradually taking on more responsibilities in case management, although again her responsibilities are not clearly defined.
- **WIA Eligibility Expert.** Although not a formal member of Launch Hampton Roads team, the WIA Career Developer determines program eligibility. The eligibility determination process is identical to that of other WIA programs and is administrated by the WIA career developer through group certification and, where necessary, one-on-on certification.
- **Site Partners.** The entrepreneurial training service provider, Old Dominion University (ODU) is the site partner. ODU also plays a role in Launch Hampton Roads case management and is given access to the PTS to update participants' training records once they begin the program.

5.3 Communication Processes

Communication channels across Launch Hampton Roads implementation key players are fairly open and smooth (Exhibit 19). There is frequent communication between the VETEC director and Launch Hampton Roads site director regarding outreach activities. The site director communicates with the grant assistant daily through meetings, phone calls, and emails regarding recruitment and information session. Monthly staff meetings include ODU and discuss current program situation and future steps for outreach activities. There is no regular communication between Launch Hampton Roads and the other two VETEC sites except for the quarterly VETEC-wide meeting.

Exhibit 19: Communications across Launch Hampton Roads Key Players

VETEC, Launch Hampton Roads and Other Region's Key Players						
Launch Hampton Roads Key Players	Key Players	VETEC Project Director	Site Director	Entrepreneurial Grant Assistant	Old Dominion University	Other VETEC Sites
	Site Director	Monthly program meeting and frequent email and phone conversations		Daily communication through email, phone, and in-person	Monthly program meeting, frequent communications regarding outreach and recruitment	Quarterly VETEC meeting and occasional email and phone conversations
	Entrepreneurial Grant Assistant	Monthly program meeting	Communicate daily face-to-face, by phone and email		Monthly program meeting	No formal communication
	Old Dominion University	Quarterly VETEC meeting and monthly program meeting	Monthly program meeting, frequent communications regarding outreach and recruitment	Monthly program meeting		

5.4 Program Activities

In this section, we describe in detail the outreach, recruitment, and intake activities of Launch Hampton Roads, as illustrated in Exhibit 20 and described below.

Exhibit 20: Launch Hampton Roads Intake Process



5.4.1 Outreach and Recruitment

Launch Hampton Roads outreach activities mainly consist of distributing print materials, such as brochures and information session flyers, in job fairs and entrepreneurship events; on-line and print information dissemination; and coordination with other programs that serve WIA adults and dislocated workers. Specific activities include:

- **Outreach via AJCs.** AJCs are important outreach portals for the program. Project staff makes every effort to ensure that all programs serving WIA adults and dislocated job

seekers are notified of Launch Hampton Roads and all WIA case managers are informed about the program. These activities are usually carried out through AJC staff meetings and a short presentation by the project manager.

- **Outreach via Brochures/Flyers.** Launch Hampton Roads brochures and information session flyers are distributed through the local office of economic development to target the business-oriented population.
- **Outreach via Print Media.** Advertisements are placed in print materials such as the employment section of local newspaper, the Virginian Pilot, and free publications such as employment weekly.
- **Outreach via Social Media.** The site takes advantage of modern social network and Internet by operating the Launch Hampton Roads Facebook page, LinkedIn page, and twitter account.
- **Outreach via Local Events.** The site sponsors local entrepreneurship events such as Start Norfolk 2013 and Maker Fair 2013. In these events, a program sign and banner designed by a local marketing firm are on display, and brochures and information session flyers are distributed at a Launch Hampton Roads booth.
- **Outreach via EVENTBRITE.** Registration of the information session through social media site EVENTBRITE uses the network effects created by EVENTBRITE to make Launch Hampton Roads visible to people who are interested in similar programs/events.
- **Outreach via Libraries.** Additional information sessions are conducted once a month at a local public library.

After potential participants register for the information session by phone or through the EVENTBRITE website, a registration confirmation email is sent through EVENTBRITE. For job seekers who do not have Internet access, a phone call is placed to remind them about their registered information session. Additionally, one day before the session a customized email is sent to the registrants reminding them again of the event and listing the eligibility documents they can bring to the information session.

An outreach email is sent out to potential participants who have inquired about Launch Hampton Roads either by phone or through the local WIA website but have not registered for an information session. This email explains the basic features of the program and directs them to the EVENTBRITE site.

5.4.2 Information Session

All potential participants – both online/phone registrants and AJC walk-ins – are required to attend the information session before they can be enrolled into the program. These information sessions are held weekly in the WIA One-Stop Workforce Centers and once a

month in local public libraries. Timing of the session varies across locations to accommodate the job seeker's schedule and transportation needs.

Attendance is taken for all attendees, who are directed to fill out the sign-in sheet before the session starts with their name, email address, and phone number. They are also given an information packet, which among other documents includes - a list of services provided by AJC, attendee survey, program brochure, Launch Hampton Road application, and list of required documents for group certification, WIA statement of family size/family income, VOS registration introduction, and additional information for being an entrepreneur²¹.

The entire information session takes about 2.5 hours and consists of three parts, the last of which is optional. The first part, which lasts about 40 minutes, is a PowerPoint presentation made by the project manager introducing the WIA and services delivered by the AJC. According to our in-depth interview with the project manager, the rationale behind this part of the session is that, since most attendees have not taken AJC Orientation before, they will benefit from learning about additional services provided by the AJC. This part of the information session also discusses general WIA eligibility criteria and ends with pop quiz questions about services delivered by the AJCs.

The second part, which lasts about 1 hour and 15 minutes, introduces the Launch Hampton Roads program. A combination of a PowerPoint presentation made by the site director and the VETEC introductory video, this part includes:

- What is VETEC and why is VETEC providing this program?
- Program service flow chart
- Evaluation and random selection
- No provision of finance
- Services provided and 64-hour core training schedule
- Details on intake steps
- What can I do if I get selected for the control group?
- Contact information for project manager.

Towards the end of the second part, the VETEC information video is shown and a group certification scheduling sheet is passed around for potential participants to sign up for WIA group certification. The session also includes pop quizzes to test knowledge related to the Launch Hampton Roads program.

²¹ All the documents included in the information session folder are included in Appendix C.

After the conclusion of the second part, there is a 5 to 10 minute break, and attendees are instructed to turn in the Launch Hampton Roads application form (intake form) and information session survey before they leave (if they have not chosen to stay for the optional third part of the session). If attendees have their eligibility documents with them, the grant assistant makes copies.

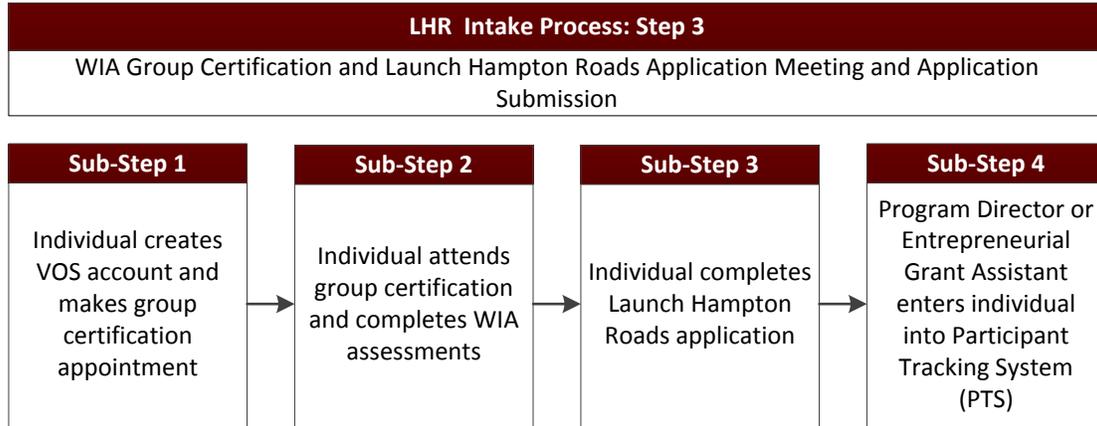
The third and optional part of the session, lasting about 35 minutes, mainly presents quotes from various online and published sources, lessons, and cartoons about starting your own business. It also touches on other small business practices such as crowd funding.

5.4.3 Post-Information Session

Exhibit 21 demonstrates what happens during and after step 3 of Exhibit 20. The Launch Hampton Roads application process differs based on whether or not an individual is already utilizing WIA services.

Individuals who have not received any AJC services before make the group certification appointment during the information session, then fill out a WIA application form, and register on VOS. After creating a VOS account, the individual attends the group certification session and meets with the WIA career developer to determine his/her WIA adult and dislocated worker eligibility. The group certification usually lasts three hours and is not VETEC-specific. Potential program participants attend a group certification with other WIA clients under the guidance of the career developer. Group certification is conducted in a classroom setting and attendees also complete their WIA TABE assessment during this class. After the conclusion of group certification, attendees meet with the career developer to determine if they are WIA eligible. Based on the availability of the career developer, they might be able to meet with her the same day or may be given a future appointment. The career developer tries to accommodate the potential applicant's schedule by conducting a one-on-one certification meeting if s/he cannot make it to the group certification.

Exhibit 21: Launch Hampton Roads Application Submission Process



If eligible, potential Launch Hampton Roads participants are contacted to schedule a VETEC application meeting with the grant assistant or site director. They are asked to bring all Launch Hampton Roads documents, a pros/cons list for starting a business, and a completed VETEC application. The site director or grant assistant enters the potential participant into the PTS after the application meeting. After an individual's information is uploaded in the system, the individual is assigned either to the treatment or control group by IMPAQ.

For individuals already receiving AJC services, the application submission process is simpler, because they do not need to attend group certification or create a VOS account. All the individual needs to do is to set up an appointment with the career developer to confirm eligibility, followed by an appointment to complete the Launch Hampton Roads application. After this point, the process is same for all the individuals irrespective of their WIA status.

5.5 Summary

The roles and responsibilities of Launch Hampton Roads project staff are not well defined, and the region does not employ traditional case managers. This program uses a range of methods to do outreach – flyers, attendance at local events, online advertising etc., but is not using VEC. The program information session is presented in three parts, and lasts around two-and-a-half hours. In addition to program and application information, the presentation includes information on starting your own business and other self-employment tips. For those who are not enrolled in WIA, the post-information session application process consists of a series of appointments, which include a group certification session, appointment for an eligibility determination session, and a VETEC application appointment. All non-WIA enrolled individuals enroll in VOS and complete WIA assessments before applying to VETEC. If an applicant is already enrolled in WIA, they do not need to attend a group certification session; they only need to have their program eligibility determined before completing an application.

6. FINDINGS ACROSS SITES

This chapter summarizes recruitment, outreach, and intake activities undertaken by the three VETEC regional sites. Section 6.1 compares the key players in each site, their respective roles and responsibilities, and communications among them. Section 6.2 compares the program activities related to recruitment, outreach, and intake at each of the three sites.

6.1 Key Players

The implementation of the VETEC program is an orchestrated effort of several players. Exhibit 22 summarizes the roles and responsibilities of key players at each site.

The VETEC model, as described in Chapter 2, specifies distinct roles for a site director, case managers, and site partners. In the VETEC implementation process, sites have not always adhered to these roles and have sometimes involved other players not specified in the VETEC model. Site directors (referred to variously as site manager/project director/project manager by the different sites) for ENOVATE and GR GATE are basically fulfilling their role as envisioned by the VETEC model – although the site manager for ENOVATE has more involvement in the management of case managers and outreach activities than specified in the program model, and the GR GATE division manager is entrusted with some of the responsibilities attached to the case managers in the VETEC model.

The Launch Hampton Roads site players are substantially different from those envisioned in the VETEC model. The site manager has taken on additional responsibilities for all outreach efforts, conducting information sessions, and holding one-on-one meetings to complete applications for potential participants. In addition, this site does not have case managers but, instead, has hired an Entrepreneurship Grant Assistant to help with those program-related activities. This site also uses the services of a WIA eligibility expert to determine eligibility for the program, in contrast to the case managers at the other two sites, who handle this part of the process as per the VETEC model. Entrepreneurship Grant Assistant and WIA eligibility expert are not among the key players specified in the VETEC model.

The role of training partners in outreach and recruitment activities is left up to the sites in the VETEC model. In actual site implementation, the training partners have varying levels of involvement at different sites. In GR GATE but not in the other two sites, the training provider, CCWA, conducts most of the outreach and recruitment activities for GR GATE program. In Launch Hampton Roads, the training provider is involved in case management and has access to the PTS.²²

²² Summary of communications across sites is provided in Appendix D.

Exhibit 22: Role and Responsibilities of Key Players

Key Players	VETEC Paradigm	ENOVATE	GR GATE	Launch HR
Site Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall program oversight, fiscal oversight and monitoring ▪ Coordinate with partners ▪ Report to VETEC director periodically about the program status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Official Title</u>: Program Manager ▪ Overall program oversight. ▪ Manages and provides overall guidance to case managers. ▪ Actively involved in outreach activities. ▪ Reports to VETEC director periodically about the program status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Official Title</u>: Site Manager ▪ Overall program oversight. ▪ Reports to VETEC director periodically about the program status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Official Title</u>: Project manager/ entrepreneurship grant coordinator ▪ Overall program management and oversees all aspects of the program. ▪ Conducts all outreach, and each information session. ▪ Meets applicants for one-on-one application meetings. ▪ Coordinates with partners. ▪ Reports to VETEC director periodically about program status.
Case Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary point of contact ▪ Communicate with potential participants about the program. ▪ Conduct outreach and recruitment activities. ▪ Conduct information sessions. ▪ Confirm eligibility. ▪ Complete application submission process and enter participant into VOS and PTS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fulfills the role as specified in the program paradigm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fulfills the role as specified in the program paradigm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No case manager.
Other Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide assistance to implement and conduct VETEC program. ▪ Primarily involvement in delivery of program services. ▪ No role in outreach and recruitment activities. However, sites are free to involve them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Partners</u>: Business Development Assistance Group (BDAG) and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA). ▪ No involvement in outreach, recruitment and intake. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Partner</u>: Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA). ▪ Conducts most of the outreach to create awareness about the program. ▪ Conducts information sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Partner</u>: Old Dominion University (ODU) ▪ Plays a role in case management. ▪ Program director updates participant records in PTS.
Additional Players				
Division Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role not specified 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manages and provides overall guidance to case managers. 	N/A
Entrepreneurship Grant Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role not specified 	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assists with outreach, recruitment activities and case management. ▪ Responds to enquiries from potential customers.
SkillSource WIA Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role not specified 	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not a formal member. ▪ Provides assistance to resolve any issues related to program eligibility.
WIA Career Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role not specified 	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not a formal member. ▪ Determines eligibility for the program.

6.2 Program Activities

This section compares describes the program activities as implemented in the three sites with the activities as described in the VETEC program model.

6.2.1 Outreach and Recruitment

Exhibit 23 shows the strategies used by the three sites to promote participation in the VETEC program. The first column lists the different recruitment strategies implemented by the three sites. The second column shows the outreach and recruitment strategy laid out in the VETEC model. Given that VEC is a principal contact point for both unemployed jobseekers and veterans – which is a key VETEC target population – the program model specifies that all sites use VEC to spread information about the VETEC program. In addition, the model calls for the sites to target those individuals already in their VOS and WIA systems, because such individuals are already attached to the workforce system and are using or have previously used WIA services, making them more likely to be VETEC eligible. Similarly, the model calls for the sites to reach out to customers who come into the AJCs to use other employment services. ENOVATE relies heavily on VEC, WIA/VOS enrolled individuals, and AJCs to recruit for its VETEC program. GR GATE also uses VEC and AJCs to advertise about the program. Launch Hampton Roads is not using VEC.

As seen in the columns 3 to 5 of Exhibit 23, all three sites use a variety of other methods – in addition to the ones suggested by the VETEC model – to raise awareness about VETEC among the target populations. For example, use of social network sites is not included in the model, but each program is using such sites to provide program information.

No common advertising materials are shared across sites and there is no communication among the sites regarding recruitment strategies. Instead, sites have designed and developed their own advertising materials for all outreach and recruitment activities. Furthermore, each site uses a different combination of strategies to conduct outreach and recruit participants.

6.2.2 Information Session

According to the program model, information sessions should not last more than one hour, and should cover a set list of topics. Most of the information session should be devoted to providing an overview of the program model, including a discussion of the purpose of VETEC, the services it provides, and what will be required of participants. In this way, the information provided should enable prospective applicants to make an informed decision on whether or not to apply. In their actual implementation strategies, however, no site is following the structure of the information session specified in the model. Exhibit 24 compares the information session as implemented at each site with the project model's specifications.

Exhibit 23: Outreach and Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment Strategies	VETEC Paradigm	ENOVATE	GR GATE	Launch HR
Advertise through VEC	✓	✓	✓	
Target individuals in WIA and VOS	✓	✓	✓	✓
Target individuals that avail AJC services	✓	✓	✓	✓
Send email blasts	✓	✓*	✓	
Send letters	✓	✓		
Advertise in local magazines, newspapers, and newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓
Put online advertisements	✓		✓	
Distribute pamphlets and bus placards.			✓	
Distribute brochures		✓	✓	✓
Distribute brochures in different languages		✓		
Distribute Information Session Flyers		✓		✓
Use social media		✓	✓	✓
Advertise via radio ads and billboards			✓	
Present program information at incubators.			✓	
Present program information at veteran organizations and veteran job fairs.			✓	
Sponsor local entrepreneurship events				✓
Advertise in public libraries		✓		✓
Attend community events, local employment and entrepreneurial events.	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Sent almost 6,000 emails to VOS registrants.

ENOVATE is the site that most closely follows the model in organizing the information session. The only point of departure is that interested individuals can go through initial eligibility screening at the information session if they have all the documents. The project model envisions eligibility screening as being done at a later date. In addition, there is little contact between case managers and information session attendees before the session.

GR GATE has a longer information session, at about 90 minutes (information session and screening), than the 60 minutes specified in the VETEC model. The presentation made during the information session at this site covers some additional topics along with the content specified and conducts eligibility screening and accepts applications during the session. GR GATE case managers also make contact with everyone registered for the information session to provide them details about the session itself and the VETEC eligibility requirements.

The Launch Hampton Roads information session deviates the most from the VETEC model as compared to the two other sites. The information session is about one and a half times longer than the session duration specified in the VETEC project model, and provides information that is often not needed for making the VETEC enrollment decision. Also, although attendees are asked to bring eligibility documents, no eligibility screening is actually performed at the session. And there is only limited contact with individuals registered for information session before they attend the session.

Exhibit 24: Details of the Information Session

Information Session Topics	VETEC Paradigm	ENOVATE	GR GATE	Launch HR
Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Register online or by phone ▪ Walk-ins are welcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Register online. ▪ Registrants receive confirmation email. ▪ Walk-ins are welcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Register online or by email/phone. ▪ Registrants do not receive a confirmation email. ▪ Walk-ins are welcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Register online via EVENTBRITE or by phone. ▪ Registrants receive confirmation email. ▪ Email specifies eligibility documents to bring, ▪ Walk-ins are welcome.
Contact with Registrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No contact required before the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case managers get in touch with registrants. ▪ Provide a list of documents to bring along with other details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited contact.
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly at 6 locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Held every week at one of the three locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Held weekly at workforce center ▪ Once a month in public library.
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximum 60 minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 45 minutes for presentation. ▪ Additional time for screening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 60 minutes for presentation. ▪ Additional time for screening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2.5 hours for three part presentation. ▪ Other than last 35 minutes, rest of the presentation is mandatory.
Topics Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VETEC informational video ▪ VETEC program overview that clearly identifies three sites for the program ▪ Program eligibility, program services, and level of effort required. ▪ Brief overview of the evaluation component, including random assignment ▪ Veteran's priority of service. ▪ Time for Q&A with attendees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same as specified in paradigm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Same as specified in paradigm. Additional components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Google success story ▪ Steps to start a new business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Covers basic information specified in paradigm. Several additional components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First part: 40 minutes long presentation covers details on Opportunity Inc. and services delivered by AJC. ▪ Second part: 1 hour 15 minutes presentation covers program details and detailed discussion of random assignment process. ▪ Third part: 35 minutes long presentation goes over issues related to starting own business.
Eligibility Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No eligibility screening at the information session. ▪ Make an appointment for a later date to determine eligibility and complete application process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If attendees bring the documents to determine eligibility, they can be screened at the session. ▪ If no documents, make an appointment with the case manager for a later date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If attendees bring the documents to determine eligibility, they can be screened at the session. ▪ If no documents, make an appointment with the case manager for a later date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No eligibility screening. ▪ If attendees bring documents, copies are made. ▪ All interested attendees make an appointment for a later date.

6.2.3 Post-Information Session

The VETEC model is explicit that individuals should not receive WIA application or assessment materials prior to random assignment – that only those individuals who participate in the VETEC program (i.e., only those in the treatment group) are required to be dual-enrolled in both WIA and VETEC. The model process differs slightly based on whether an individual is enrolled in WIA prior to their VETEC contact or not:

- **Enrolled in WIA prior to VETEC:** Once assigned to the treatment group, the individual is re-entered into VOS.
- **Not enrolled in WIA prior to VETEC:** Once assigned to the treatment group, the individual submits a WIA application and takes WIA assessments. After this process is complete, the individual is entered into VOS for the first time.

Exhibit 25 compares the application process as outlined by the VETEC model to the process actually being implemented at each site. ENOVATE is following the application process outlined in the VETEC project model most closely. Individuals are (re)entered into VOS only after they have been assigned to the treatment group. Step 5 is followed by the completion of WIA assessments. GR GATE differs from the VETEC project model at Steps 3 and 4 by: 1) requiring all non-WIA enrolled individuals to complete a WIA application when they complete a VETEC application, and 2) entering individuals into VOS when they are entered into the PTS. In certain cases, individuals are given WIA assessments before random assignment.

Launch Hampton Roads site deviates from the project model at both Step 1 and Step 2. This site requires all individuals interested in enrolling in VETEC to have a VOS account before they are determined VETEC-eligible. Once they have registered for VOS (if they did not already have a VOS account), they are screened for program eligibility at a three-hour group certification session. After group certification, they schedule an application appointment (if eligible) to complete a VETEC application. They are also given all WIA assessments during group certification, as opposed to waiting until random assignment as specified in the VETEC model. At Launch Hampton Roads, all interested individuals who have never availed themselves of any services from the AJC complete their WIA application during the information session, which is contrary to the process laid out in the VETEC model.

**Exhibit 25: Variations in Sites' Implementation of the Application Process
As Compared to the VETEC Model**

	Steps in VETEC Application Process				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
VETEC Model	Applicant schedules application appointment	Case manager reviews documents for eligibility	Individual completes VETEC application	Case manager enters individual into Participant Tracking System	Individual randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group
ENOVATE	Same as model	Same as model	Same as model	Same as model	Same as model
Greater Richmond GATE	Same as model	Same as model	Same as model, but Non-WIA enrolled individuals also submit WIA application	Same as model, but Individuals also entered into Virtual One-Stop (VOS)	Same as model
Launch Hampton Roads	Individual also schedules group certification appointment	Eligibility determined after group certification session	Same as model	Same as model	Same as model

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this report was to review the early implementation of the VETEC program to identify any implementation challenges being experienced among the three participating sites and to help develop potential solutions to the challenges identified. To gather the necessary information, the IMPAQ team visited each of the three VETEC sites during October and November 2013 to collect information on the outreach, recruitment, and intake activities being undertaken. The conclusions and recommendations provided below are based on discussions with the VETEC Project Director; interviews conducted during site visits and by phone with site directors/managers, case managers, training provider partners; focus groups with information session attendees; and reviews of documents used for outreach and recruitment.

7.1 Conclusions

The VETEC outreach, recruitment, and intake model outlines a clear strategy for participant intake into the program. This strategy consists of a step-by-step process that reaches out to interested applicants and drives them through the four distinct steps necessary to apply to the program: 1) Outreach and recruitment; 2) information session; 3) VETEC application appointment and submission; and 4) random assignment. Each step involves a set of specific activities to be carried out at each site by a set of key players and partners whose roles and responsibilities are also defined by the program model.

As part of the WIF funding requirements, the grantee is required to engage a third party independent evaluator to measure and evaluate the impact of this program. IMPAQ has implemented a rigorous random assignment evaluation design to measure the effects of this program on the participants. This evaluation design is based on the premise that, as stated in the grant application, each site will follow a set of common processes and implement the same program in each region. As a result, participants will have the same experiences in terms of recruitment, intake and program services irrespective of the region.

Based on the data gathered in our site visits and documented in the previous chapters, ***our main conclusion is that the outreach, recruitment and intake phase of the VETEC program is being operated very differently at each site.*** Despite some overall similarities, it seems that rather than implementing a single program at three different sites – as originally envisioned in the VETEC grant program design – three different programs are being implemented, with significant variations in the structure of the information session and application process across sites. These differences emerge across each of the three activities being examined.

The fact that the VETEC program is being implemented differently by each site has several important implications for the evaluation component. First, the evaluation design assumes that this program is operating as a singular program at the three sites. This assumption allows grouping of the data from these three sites for an impact evaluation of the VETEC program. However, if sites are deviating from the project model, grouping of data from the three sites may not be viable. Here at best one can identify the effects of the program for each site

separately. However, if the number of participants at each site is small, it might not be possible to conduct a separate analysis for each site.

Second, according to the VETEC model, each region's program should provide the same set of entrepreneurial and training services, so that participating individuals have the same experience regardless of the region in which they live. However, if each site does not follow the same operating procedures, the participants might receive different services at each site making it difficult to identify the overall effect of VETEC program services.

Third, deviations in the intake process at each site might affect the number and characteristics of individuals that are enrolling in the program. If the process of enrollment at a particular site involves more effort, it might lead to fewer individuals enrolling. Further, the individuals who have tried harder and put in more effort to get in the program might be different from individuals that followed simpler or fewer steps to get in the program. Due to the above stated reasons it may be difficult to evaluate the VETEC program and determine its effect on the outcomes of participants if sites do not follow common operating procedures.

7.2 Recommendations and Lessons Learned

As a third-party evaluator, IMPAQ has extensive experience in conducting site visits and implementation analyses. Drawing on prior experience and based on observations and data collected through the site visits to the three VETEC sites, the research team has identified lessons learned during early implementation of the VETEC program. These 'lessons learned' ultimately inform recommendations that can improve implementation efforts. As the goal of this study is to help the three sites tailor their strategies to better reflect those specified in the VETEC model, we present a set of lessons learned below. These lessons are presented in the order in which the services are provided. As noted, this should enable a truer test of the VETEC program strategy.

Standardize the Outreach, Recruitment, and Intake Across Sites. As stated above, it is critical for each of the sites to maintain fidelity to the VETEC program model to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the program and to enable the third party evaluator (IMPAQ) to be able to fully examine the impact of the program. This overall recommendation is the most important to address moving forward.

Look for Opportunities to Share Information, Resources, and Lessons Learned Across Sites. For example, even though recruitment methods are largely consistent with the processes specified by the VETEC model, advertising materials are different, with sites having designed and developed their own materials for their outreach and recruitment activities. No common advertising materials are shared across sites and there is no communication among sites regarding recruitment strategies. Moving forward, VETEC sites should look for ways to leverage their resources and create shared / common tools.

Involve AJCs in Advertising the VETEC Program and Recruiting Participants. Displaying promotional materials about the VETEC program at the AJCs will enable individuals visiting these centers for other services to learn about this program. It is also important to actively involve VETEC case managers early in the process – in outreach and recruitment, and in developing promotional materials. Their direct involvement with potential participants could provide valuable additional insights further along in the process.

Focus on Specific VETEC Details during the First Contact with Potential Participants. Many information session attendees reported that they called to get additional information about the VETEC program. However, most of the conversations focused on determining their program eligibility rather than providing additional program details. Personnel receiving such calls should focus on providing details on what the program actually offers. Callers can then use that information to spread word about VETEC and decide if the program is of interest to them. Excessive focus on eligibility may deter potential participants from learning enough about the program itself to make an informed decision.

Use a Website such as EVENTBRITE to Register for Information Sessions. Some information session attendees reported that they did not receive a confirmation email after registering for the information session through the website. This created confusion as to whether or not they had successfully registered. Further, they were given too little notice to collect all the documents they were supposed to bring to the information session. Using a website such as EVENTBRIGHT to register information session attendees can solve these problems. This website provides the option to set-up confirmation and reminders emails that are automatically sent out and also allows customizing of email content. As a result, registrants can be kept informed and all the required information can be provided to them without having to involve otherwise busy case managers in the process.

Invest More Time in Recruiting WIA/VOS Enrolled Individuals. The focus of the VETEC program is to provide training and support to individuals who want to start their own business. Since most of the WIA/VOS enrolled individuals are already job seekers, VETEC could be of great interest to them – making direct advertising to this group a potentially very valuable outreach and recruitment strategy.

Keep the Content of the Information Session Simple and VETEC-Specific. Since the very purpose of the information session is to provide details about the VETEC program, it is important that sites follow the VETEC model regarding the session's content.

Direct the Sites to Address Finance-Related Questions. Attendees at each site said the information session did not provide enough information regarding business loans, seed capital to start a business, and other finance-related issues. Sites need to be given clear direction on how to handle these common queries as part of their presentation during the session.

Keep the Information Session to a Maximum of 60 minutes. Consistent with keeping the content of the information session focused on VETEC, respondents from focus groups conducted after the sessions reported that they would like the session to be shorter. Since

many of them have at least some employment already, not everyone can make a day-time commitment beyond an hour.

Engage Case Managers in Helping to Facilitate the Application Process. As specified in the VETEC model, it is important to engage case managers in providing program assistance during intake. Case managers can support outreach and recruitment efforts, conduct information sessions, and take charge of the application submission process – starting from determining eligibility to entering participants into the PTS. Having dedicated case managers for the VETEC program reduces the time commitment required by the potential participants to enroll in the program as they are not grouped together with everyone else seeking WIA services.

Minimize the Number of Trips Potential Participants Must Make to Enroll. The time that potential participants need to spend in the VETEC enrollment process can be reduced by combining the sequence of activities more efficiently. Conducting eligibility screening at the information session, for example, prevents those judged ineligible from having to make unnecessary trips to the AJC. The second appointment with the case worker can then be used to fill out all other paper work related to the VETEC program application and enter the individual into the PTS. After this second visit, only individuals assigned to the treatment group need to make another visit to finish their WIA assessments.

Only Enter individuals in VOS and Administer WIA assessments after Assignment to the Treatment Group. Registering individuals in VOS before they: 1) decide to apply to the VETEC program and 2) are also assigned to the treatment group is inefficient. Once an individual is assigned to the treatment group, s/he can be (re)-entered in VOS and given WIA assessments, if needed. The VETEC case manager/program manager's responsibility is to get potential participants who meet VETEC eligibility requirements through the VETEC intake process expeditiously. If individuals want to avail themselves of other services, they should follow the procedures required for those – which are separate from the requirements of the VETEC program and should not take up VETEC staff time.