

Media Alert

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NEW RIVER | MOUNT ROGERS REGION

Western Virginia Youth to Benefit from YouthBuild Grant

Radford & Roanoke, VA – The U.S. Department of Labor has announced the award of \$89 million in grants in 31 states and Puerto Rico to help youth ages 16-24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market to obtain employment in construction and other in-demand industries. Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor’s [Employment and Training Administration](#), YouthBuild grants support a pre-apprenticeship model to help these young people learn valuable occupational skills.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board were the two organizations in Virginia to receive YouthBuild grant funding. Goodwill Industries of the Valleys received \$1,199,000 for the Roanoke Valley area. The New River-Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium received \$1,500,000 for 13 Southwest Virginia counties included in the New River Valley (NRV) and Mount Rogers Planning Districts. The grant will help provide academic skills, life skills, and training for in-demand occupations to youth ages 16-24 who have dropped out of high school. The goal is to help youth achieve a high school diploma or GED and connect them to employment or post-secondary education.

Goodwill plans to serve 64 youth in the Roanoke Valley. In Roanoke, it will be a partnership between Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, Real Experiences Affecting Change (REACH), Region V Adult Education, The Build Smart Institute, and Virginia Career Works – Blue Ridge.

“We are very excited about this opportunity to provide academic and life skills training to 64 youth in the Roanoke community,” states Stephanie Hoer, Vice President of Mission Services for Goodwill Industries of the Valleys. “The partnership and collaboration with local Roanoke community organizations will help these youth become job or college ready and place them on a path to a career. We will work with our colleagues in the New River-Mount Rogers area to share best practices and to have a true impact on youth in Western Virginia.”

New River-Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board, along with the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, plans to serve 90 youth in partnership with Habitat for Humanity and Floyd Initiative for Safe Housing (FISH) in the NRV and People, Inc. in Mount Rogers for the build sites. Other partners include Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education, New River Community College’s Office of Transition, Adult Education Program, Build Smart Institute along with many other regional agencies and organizations.

“This is such a great opportunity to have YouthBuild come to the region! In our **Pathways to Youth Opportunities** project we opted for the “Construction Plus” YouthBuild Program, which will allow youth that participate in the project to explore and choose many career paths once they’ve completed time on the work sites,” states Marty Holliday, Executive Director of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board. “We have a long-standing relationship with Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. and the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, and it’s amazing both areas received this grant. We look forward to being able to support and learn from each other as we plan and implement our respective projects.”

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About Goodwill Industries of the Valleys

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys serves 35 counties and 14 cities throughout Central, Southwest, and Southside Virginia. Its mission is to eliminate poverty through empowering individuals, strengthening families, and building stronger communities. In 2020, Goodwill served 63,078 youth, adults, and seniors who needed assistance getting back to work and gaining greater independence, placed 2,598 people into jobs in our community, and helped individuals attain 6,321 industry recognized credentials that will allow them to be more competitive in their job search and to find higher paying employment. At the end of May, Goodwill had already assisted over 17,400 people in 2021. Visit www.goodwillvalleys.com for more information.

About New River-Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board consist of the chief elected official or the chief administrative officer from each of the local governments comprising a 13-jurisdiction area including the counties of Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington and Wythe and the cities of Bristol, Galax, and Radford. The Consortium Board serves as the policy board for the area which includes making appointments to the Workforce Development Board.

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (WDB) is made up of representatives from regional businesses (51%) and federally required members (e.g., Economic Development, Education, Labor, Community Organizations and more). The WDB oversees the programs and initiatives as specified in the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (which include programs for Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers) and other special grants and programs as available. The WDB is the designated convener for the region's workforce system (in order to have a seamless interface with the business community and economic development entities).

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