



# THE FAIRFAX TALENT-UP FUND

*The Work-Based Learning Opportunity Fund Demonstration Project*

June 13, 2023

Economic Initiatives Committee

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# Topics & Goals

1. Outline Talent-Up goals and structure
2. Present employer needs and labor market realities
3. Confirm Talent-Up unique placement in the economic and workforce development landscape

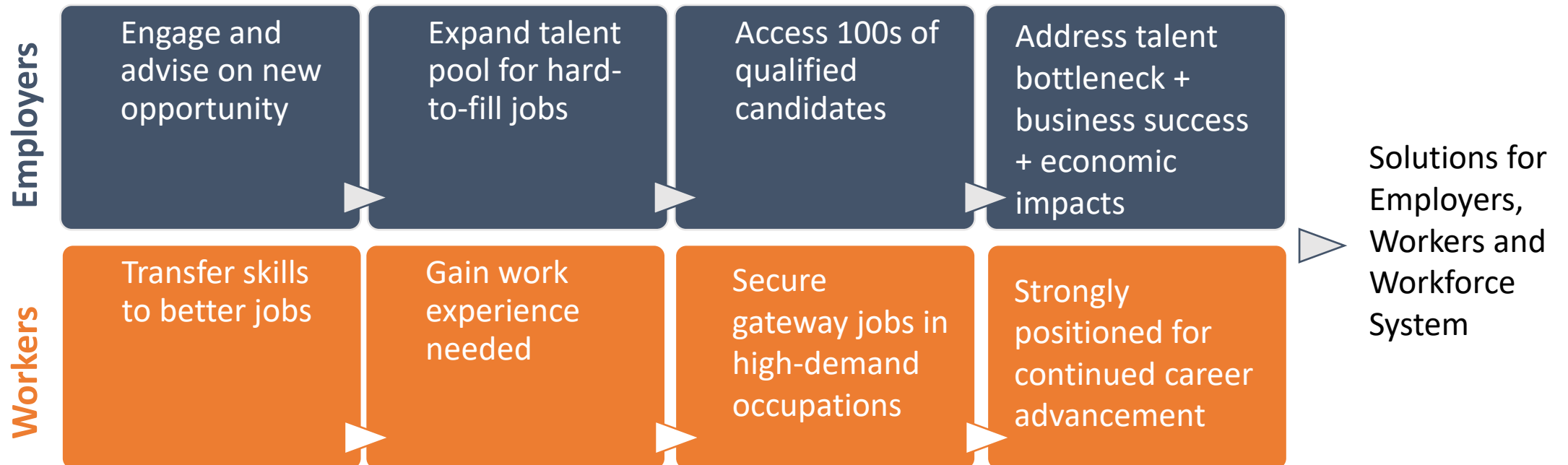
**Objective:** Gather feedback from the Board of Supervisors to finalize the program and seek Board approval at the July 11 meeting

Talent-Up is a response to **Economic Initiatives Committee** and **Economic Advisory Commission Recommendations**

# Talent-Up Fund: Needed and Unique

Talent Up will match local employers with qualified but untapped talent through *paid* temp-to-permanent work-based learning internships

What's Special About Talent Up?



# An Opportunity to “Grow our Own” Talent

Continuing era of flat labor market growth + national labor shortage =  
limited talent attraction,  
employers in all sectors re-thinking talent strategies

- 71%<sup>1</sup>** Northern Virginia employers that report difficulty filling job openings
- 67,659<sup>2</sup>** Open jobs in Fairfax County (May 2023)
- 30,000+<sup>3</sup>** Underemployed and unemployed workers, Fairfax County (U-6)
- 207,000<sup>4</sup>** STARS (Workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes) with transferable skills but no college degree

## Talent Up Aligns Urgent Employer Need and Worker Opportunity

<sup>1</sup> Northern Virginia Labor Market Index Report, January 2023

<sup>2</sup> Chmura Jobs EQ, May 2023

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Report on Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for States, April 2023

<sup>4</sup> Opportunity@Work Report, Spring 2023

# Talent-Up Addresses Gaps

## Gap in Regional Workforce Systems

Large companies may create their own pipelines

GoVA is focused on higher-wage jobs

Colleges and universities 4-year degrees or higher

Public Workforce System supports all jobseekers

**Talent-Up: Careers & Economic Mobility**

Entry-Level minimum wage opportunities

Higher-Skilled  
Workers

Missing  
Middle

Lower-Skilled  
Workers

## Gap in Work-Based Learning (WBL) Internships

- Talent Up differs from traditional WBL which focuses more on youth or college students
- Talent Up is focused on connecting workers to jobs with economic mobility
- Talent Up offers a shorter on ramp to full-time employment than apprenticeship

# Talent-Up Offers Employers a Solution to Hiring Challenges

- ✓ Targets hard-to-fill entry-level professional gateway jobs
- ✓ Re-positions WBL as a low-risk temp-to-perm hiring onramp
- ✓ Incentivizes employer participation by underwriting WBL wages
- ✓ Advises employers on revising job descriptions to focus on skills-based hiring, increasing the pool of qualified applicants by up to 50%\*
- ✓ Easy access to 100s of candidates via talent development partners

\*Source: U.S. Census data comparing Fairfax County adult population with college degree vs. high school diploma

# Talent-Up: How it Works



# Talent-Up: Eligibility Criteria

## Employer Selection Criteria

- Physical presence in Fairfax Co.
- Ready to establish a WBL internship

## Employer Priority-of-Service

- Targeted industry occupations
- Starting wages above \$20/hr.
- Has open position to make offer to successful intern

## Job-Seeker Participation Criteria

- Fairfax County resident, age 18+
- Impacted by pandemic-related unemployment, underemployed or seeking greater economic mobility
- Meets skill requirements of an open internship

(Note: Employers make the final internship selection)



## Examples of High-Demand, Hard-to-Recruit Gateway Jobs

Occupational Gateway Job	Fairfax Co. Job Openings May 2023	Average Starting Wage
IT Computer User Support Specialist	1,245	\$22/hour
Office Administrative Support	2,836	\$19-\$27/hour
Finance/Accounting Clerks	528	\$19-\$27/hour
Sales Representatives	1,114	\$22/hour
Medical Assistants/Health Support Technicians	589	\$18-\$23/hour

Sources: Chmura Jobs EQ, Opportunity@Work

# Talent Up Fund: Partnering for Success

The *SkillSource* Group, Inc., the Program Administrator, *with support from partners:*

- Identify local employers with job openings in high-demand occupations
- Screen job-seekers and match them with employers in *paid* temp to permanent internships

## Employer Outreach Partners

- Department of Economic Initiatives
- Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (EDA)
- Opportunity@Work
- Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce/local chambers of commerce

## Talent Development Partners

- Department of Family Services/Virginia Career Works Northern - Career Centers
- Northern Virginia Community College
- FCPS Adult & Career Education (ACE)
- Nonprofit workforce development programs

*Multi-channel employer outreach campaigns launched in Summer/Early Fall 2023*

# Talent-Up Fund Project Budget

**\$2.5 million in ARPA funding requested**

## **Budget Components (18 months)**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Employer Outreach & Identification        | 10% |
| • Job-seeker Identification & Screening     | 15% |
| • Employer Advising and Job Seeker Coaching | 10% |
| • Work-based Learning Internship Wages*     | 55% |
| • Data and Analytics/Tracking               | 10% |

\* *Typical Internship - \$8,400 (\$20 hourly rate, 35 hours weekly/10-12 weeks)*

# Talent-Up Shorter-term Metrics

## Employer Engagement

- Employers Targeted Outreach: 500 - 600
- Employers Participating/Engaged: 200- 300+
  - Participating employers will receive technical assistance

## Worker Opportunity

- Job Seekers Placed in Internship: 185-200
  - Participating job seekers will receive coaching/training

## Impacts

- Employers reporting more inclusive hiring practices: 75%
- Workers placed in jobs (permanent, full-time): 85%
- Percentage of workers reporting wage gains: 85%
- Average wage gain: 20%

# Talent-Up Longer- Term Impacts

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Activates multiple County Strategic Plan goals

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Advances Equity (Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity)

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Innovation for Employers, Talent developers, and Workers

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Capacity-building for Local Workforce System

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# QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION