



# **Talent Pathways: A Biosciences Workforce and Talent Strategy for GO Virginia Region 9 to Support Rapid Growth and Momentum of a Vibrant Industry**

**Presentation to GO Virginia Region 9 Council  
January 16, 2026**

# Project Purpose and Approach

Fueled by new investments, growth in the bioscience industry necessitates a regional talent strategy.

## SITUATION FOR REGION 9

Diverse and Growing Set of Bioscience Companies

Existing Challenges: Talent Sourcing & Retention, Skills Mismatches, and Insufficient Talent Development

Major New Investments That Will Exacerbate Existing Challenges

## NEED FOR A REGIONAL TALENT STRATEGY

Continued growth in the bioscience industry in Region 9 prompted a strategic planning effort leveraging:

- In-depth quantitative demand and supply analyses
- Qualitative inputs from regional industry executives, economic development leaders, education and research leadership (both K - 12 and post-secondary), and other key stakeholders



# Region 9 Bioscience Industry

The region's industry and innovation ecosystem has significant, diverse, and growing talent demands.

Region 9's Bioscience Industry represents:

**2,100**

Jobs

**254**

Establishments

**1.37**

Virginia "LQ"

**23%**

Job Growth Since 2019

**\$121,000**

Avg. Annual Wages\*

Growth and momentum are expected to continue based on recent investments by:



\*Average wage figure is for the Industrial Biosciences component of the overall industry.

Source: TEconomy analysis of Lightcast (2025.3) QCEW data.

# High Demand, High Priority Industry Roles

In-demand industry roles span science, engineering, and business fields.

## SIGNIFICANT VOLUME NEEDS

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- Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing “Operators”
- Precision Manufacturing Technicians
- Multidisciplinary Engineers
- Field Service Engineers
- Molecular Biologists & Assay Development Scientists
- Customer-Facing Technical Support Staff
- Lab/Research Technicians and Specialists
- Biomedical Research Scientists/PI's

## SPECIALIZED, LOWER VOLUME NEEDS

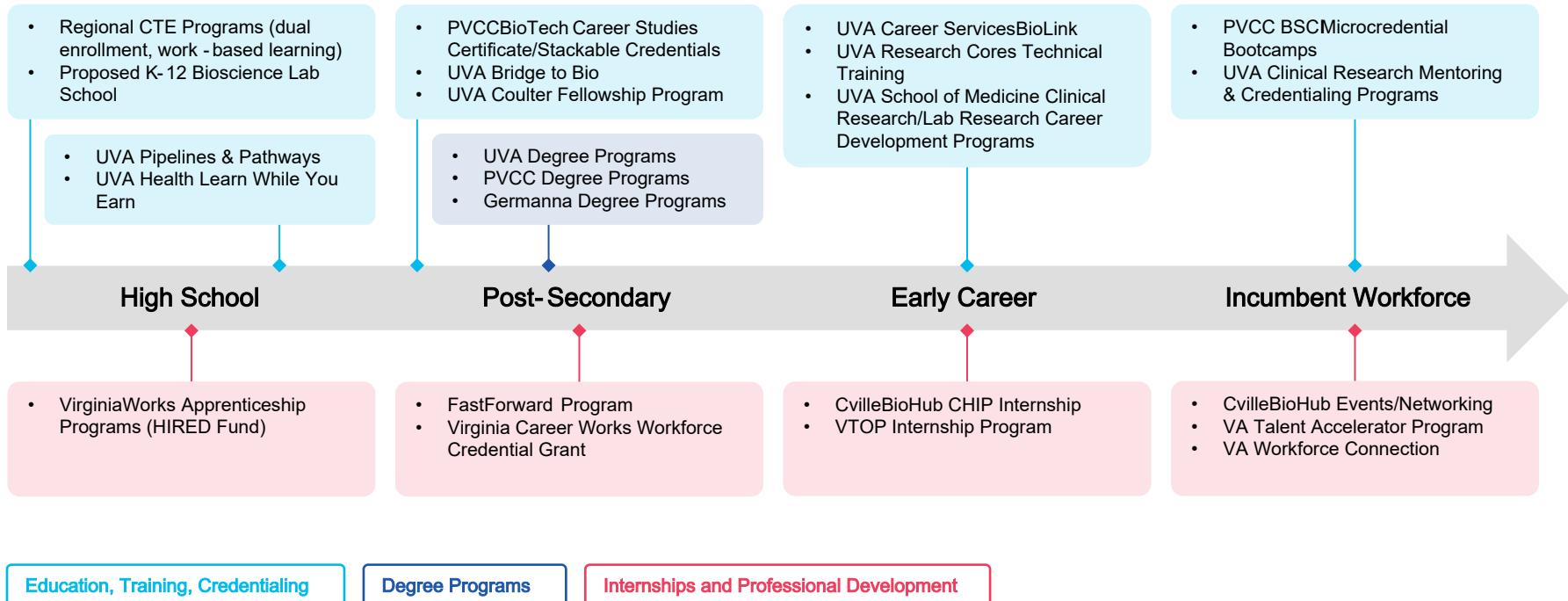
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- Regulatory & Quality Assurance Specialists
- Biomed/Biotech/Drug Sales & Marketing Professionals
- Bioinformatics Specialists
- Clinical Operations Managers
- Project Managers for Translational Science
- Specialized Medicinal Chemistry & Drug Dev. Scientists
- Industrial Maintenance Professionals



# Bioscience Talent Pipeline

Central Virginia has a robust foundation for a multi - stage bioscience talent pipeline.



# Strengths and Challenges

Input from regional leaders about Region 9's strengths and challenges informed strategic priorities.

## STRENGTHS

- UVA and other institutional strengths contribute to vibrant ecosystem
- Strengths in particular fields (areas of expertise)
- Strong partners for talent connections
- Other themes: region's quality of life, high retention rates among senior talent, etc.
- High-quality, industry-relevant training programs spanning K-12, higher ed

## GAPS AND CHALLENGES

- Talent gaps and recruiting outside of Central VA
- Limitations in local entry-level talent pipeline
- Growing cluster but challenging industry dynamics
- Limited use of state/regional workforce development programs by companies
- Current programs operating in siloes, limited ecosystem coordination



# What Should We Do?

Four strategies will address identified priorities.



## Strategy 1

Grow the Pipeline for the  
Regional Biosciences  
Technician and Laboratory  
Support Workforce



## Strategy 2

Address Specialized Talent  
and Skills Demand in High-  
Skilled Roles



## Strategy 3

Better and More  
Seamlessly Connect the  
Workforce and Talent  
Ecosystem and Resources  
by Formalizing a Regional  
Framework for  
Coordinating Biosciences  
Workforce Development  
Pathways and Enhancing  
Career and Company  
Awareness



## Strategy 4

Develop, Tell, and Promote  
Central Virginia's  
Bioscience Industry "Story"  
and Associated Brand  
Identity for Specialized  
Talent Recruitment



# Reference Slides

## Strategy #1: Grow the Pipeline for the Regional Biosciences Technician and Laboratory Support Workforce

**Action 1.1:** Scale and Support Targeted Technical Training Programs in Partnership with Community Colleges and Regional Workforce Boards

**Action 1.2:** Expand Collaboration and Coordination with UVA Workforce and Training Programs to Complement Regional Training

**Action 1.3:** Expand Experiential Learning and Lab Exposure Programs for Bachelor's Level Students to Better Position Entry -Level Graduates for Industry and Research Settings

**Action 1.4:** Anchor Talent in the Region by Providing Ongoing Professional Development for Entry -Level and Early-Career Workers

## Strategy #2: Address Specialized Talent and Skills Demand in High -Skilled Roles

**Action 2.1:** Strengthen Structured Talent Pipelines by Expanding Experiential Learning and Skills -Based Development Programs for Science and Engineering Students

**Action 2.2:** Fully Reinstate and Fund the CvilleBioHub Internship Program (CHIP) at More Significant Scale and Connect to Other Regional Intern Programs

**Action 2.3:** Leverage Proximity to UVA Health and Clinical Research Infrastructure to Create Translational Research Fellowships and Joint Industry - Clinician Training Programs

**Action 2.4:** Build Programs for Interdisciplinary Skill Development that Bridge Research and Commercialization

**Action 2.5:** Encourage Return Migration of Talent by Targeting Former UVA and Other Regional Graduates Now Working in Larger Biotech Hubs

## **Strategy #3: Better and More Seamlessly Connect the Workforce and Talent Ecosystem and Resources by Formalizing a Regional Framework for Coordinating Biosciences Workforce Development Pathways and Enhancing Career and Company Awareness**

**Action 3.1:** Establish and Fund a "Regional Biosciences Career Navigator" Function at CvilleBioHub

**Action 3.2:** Increase Cross-Company Awareness and Collaboration Through Signature Events and Industry - Wide Networking

**Action 3.3:** Expand Networking Opportunities Like Those Offered by CvilleBioHub's CEO Roundtables to Enable Broader Participation and Access

**Action 3.4:** Establish a Curated Venue for Emerging Leader Development and Advising to Seed Next Generation of Life Sciences Talent

**Action 3.5:** Develop a Coordination Framework and Working Group Among Regional Workforce Development Stakeholders Which Can Seek to Better Integrate Programming, Avoid Duplicative Functions, and Improve Responsiveness

## **Strategy #4: Develop, Tell, and Promote Central Virginia's Bioscience Industry "Story" and Associated Brand Identity for Specialized Talent Recruitment**

**Action 4.1:** Leverage Ongoing Identification of Regional Strengths and Growth Opportunities in the Bioscience Industry and Innovation Thru Identified in Concurrent Work with CVPED and UVA for the "Innovation Corridor" Effort

**Action 4.2:** Coordinate with CvilleBioHub, CVPED, and UVA's New Manning Institute to Amplify the Regional Research Brand Around Focus on Early- Stage Biologics Development