

**TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION**

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 501

Richmond, Virginia 23219

**Education Committee Meeting**

Thursday, May 27, 2021

1:30 o'clock p.m.

(Electronic Conference Call Meeting)

1     APPEARANCES:

2     Ms. Rebecca Coleman, Chairman  
3     The Honorable Louise Lucas, Vice Chair  
4     Ms. Gretchen Clark  
5     Mr. Joel Cunningham  
6     Dr. Alexis I. Ehrhardt  
7     The Honorable Chris L. Hurst  
8     Ms. Sandy Ratliff  
9     Mr. Cecil E. Shell  
10    Mr. Richard L. Sutherland  
11    The Honorable Roslyn C. Tyler

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13    COMMISSION STAFF:

14    Mr. Evan Feinman, Executive Director  
15    Mr. Andy Sorrell, Deputy Executive Director  
16    Mr. Michael Kaestner, Grants Program Administration Director  
17    Ms. Sarah K. Capps - Grants Program Administrator - Southern  
18    Ms. Sara G. Williams, Grants Program Administrator - Southwest  
19    Ms. Stephanie S. Kim, Director of Finance  
20    Mr. Jordan Butler, Public Relations Coordinator

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1 May 27, 2021

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3 MS. COLEMAN: Good afternoon, everyone. I want to  
4 call our Education Meeting to order, and I'll ask Andy to go over  
5 the rules of the meeting.

6 MR. SORRELL: All right, good morning. Due to the  
7 Governor's declared state of emergency, this meeting is being  
8 held electronically without a quorum of the public body physically  
9 assembled at one location. The nature of this pandemic makes it  
10 impractical and unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location.

11 In addition, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss  
12 or transact business that is statutorily required to continue the  
13 operations of the Commission.

14 Public notice of this meeting was provided on both the  
15 Commonwealth's calendar and the Commission's website,  
16 [revitalizeva.org](http://revitalizeva.org), contemporaneously with the notice provided to  
17 the Commission members. The meeting's agenda and all other  
18 meeting material can be found on the Commission's website. As  
19 with all Commission meetings, there will be an opportunity for  
20 public comment both at the beginning and the end of this  
21 meeting. A recording of the meeting will be posted on the  
22 Commission's website as soon as practical after the meeting.

23 Now, for a few short ground rules for our electronic  
24 meeting. Please mute yourself if you are not speaking. If you  
25 are only participating by phone, you should be able to mute

1 yourself by hitting Star 6 to mute or unmute. Typically as we  
2 start these meetings, all participants are unmuted. If you are  
3 loud or if disruptions occur or some kind of background noises, it  
4 might disrupt the meeting, then we will return you to mute, and  
5 if it continues repeatedly, then we'll need to remove you from the  
6 meeting.

7 If members of the public have questions or comments,  
8 please reserve those until the public comment portion, which I  
9 mentioned you can use the raised hand feature or send a  
10 comment in the chat box of the WebEx program, and we can  
11 make sure that the comment would be read during public  
12 comments. Typically, the Chair will ask if there's anyone  
13 representing a project, so you can reserve comments until your  
14 particular projects are on, for that particular reason.

15 At the time of public comments, please do state your  
16 full name, your location, and any organization or group that you  
17 might represent. Try to keep your comments to two minutes  
18 each so that everybody has a chance to speak.

19 That's all I have, Madam Chairwoman.

20 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Andy.

21 Evan, would you like to call the roll?

22 MR. FEINMAN: Certainly.

23 Ms. Coleman.

24 MS. COLEMAN: Here.

25 MR. FEINMAN: Senator Lucas.

1 SENATOR LUCAS: Here. Can you hear me?  
2 MR. FEINMAN: I can, Senator.  
3 Ms. Clark.  
4 MS. CLARK: Here.  
5 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Cunningham.  
6 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Here.  
7 MR. FEINMAN: Dr. Ehrhardt.  
8 DR. EHRHARDT: Here.  
9 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Harris.  
10 MR. HARRIS: (No response).  
11 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Hurst. I heard some dialing,  
12 we'll come back.  
13 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Rasoul.  
14 DELEGATE RASOUL: (No response).  
15 MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Ratliff.  
16 MS RATLIFF: Here.  
17 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Shell.  
18 MR. SHELL: Here.  
19 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Sutherland.  
20 MR. SUTHERLAND: Here.  
21 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Tyler.  
22 DELEGATE TYLER: Here.  
23 MR. FEINMAN: You have a quorum, Madam  
24 Chairwoman.  
25 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you very much. I want to start

1 by thanking Delegate Aird for the outstanding job she did in  
2 January of chairing the Committee. The evidence of her good  
3 work can be found in the minutes which were published on the  
4 website. I'm sure you've all had a chance to review them.

5 Are there any suggestions for modification for the  
6 minutes? Hearing none, can we have a motion, please, to  
7 approve the minutes?

8 MR. SHELL: So moved, Cecil.

9 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Second.

10 MS. COLEMAN: Joel, Joel, thank you, Cecil, thank  
11 you, Joel. Moved and seconded. Any further comments? All in  
12 favor, signify by saying aye. (Ayes). Opposed? (No response).  
13 Okay, the minutes have been approved.

14 We now have an opportunity for public comment.  
15 Anyone that would like to comment publicly? Okay.

16 Then, let's move on to the Extensions and  
17 Modifications, there are just two of them.

18 And we'll have Sara, are you there?

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, I'm here.

20 MS. COLEMAN: Please take over.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. There are two projects today  
22 that would require an extension. The first is Grant Number 3279,  
23 that is for CODEVA, Inc. The project is building the digital  
24 Dominion Computer Science Education For All. This was  
25 approved in May of 2017. There is a small balance of \$37,903

1 for training. This project provides computer science training to  
2 teachers in the Tobacco Region. CODEVA, Inc. has been very  
3 successful in establishing hugs in each of the two parts of the  
4 region. One is the Institute for the Southern Virginia Region and  
5 here in the Southwest, they are partners with Southwest Virginia  
6 Higher Education Center.

7 The training has been very well received in the region  
8 and a huge number of teachers have participated; however, as a  
9 result of the pandemic, they had to quickly shift to an online  
10 format, and thankfully they were well positioned to be able to do  
11 that. However, teaching online resulted in some cost savings,  
12 and so they have the money remaining in the grant and they  
13 would like to continue to use that to offer additional training  
14 during the next year.

15 We also anticipate that there will be a second  
16 allocation for another round of funding that will be submitted to  
17 the upcoming Education Program. Those applications are due in  
18 the summer and will be considered in September. So, Staff  
19 recommends the approval of a one-year extension through May  
20 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 contingent upon Staff approval of a budget that  
21 allocates the remaining grant balance into the appropriate budget  
22 category.

23 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Sara. Are there any  
24 questions from the Committee members?

25 UNIDENTIFIED: Can you explain that a little bit more

1 for me if you don't mind?

2 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm sorry, explain which piece?

3 UNIDENTIFIED: The contingency.

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, yes. Again, this balance is a  
5 result of some cost savings from where they shifted to an online  
6 format, and I also believe that they have probably learned a lot  
7 over the three years of the grant and with this balance there just  
8 sort of the need to readjust that among the categories to reflect  
9 where they need to use it now. This is a very modest amount  
10 overall for the grant. In my discussions with them, I think it's  
11 just general reallocation of where funds are needed over the  
12 future months.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

14 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Sara, for the explanation.  
15 Does anyone from CODEVA have any comments they would like  
16 to make before we move on to the next one? Okay, Sara.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: The next project is Grant 3270,  
18 Russell County Public Schools, Southwest Virginia's race to the  
19 GED program. It was approved in May of 2017 and has a  
20 balance of \$32,557. This is another project that was impacted  
21 by the pandemic. I think most of you are aware of this project,  
22 it's one we have supported for many, many years. We provide  
23 funding to support GED testing in the Region. This curriculum in  
24 particular covers merely the entire Southwest Region, there are a  
25 couple of localities that are not part of this. But by and large, the

1 majority of the Southwest Region is supported here.

2 Unfortunately with the pandemic, they were not able  
3 to offer testing, they were closed down for several months. And  
4 as a result, they have this balance. Thankfully, they are up and  
5 running and will be able to resume testing. This is another one  
6 where a new application is submitted, is expected to be  
7 submitted this summer, that's pretty typical for them, we do  
8 support them, you know, with new grants every few years.

9 So, with that said, Staff recommends the approval of  
10 a one-year extension for May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Are there any  
11 questions about this one?

12 MS. COLEMAN: Hearing no questions, is there  
13 anybody from the Southwest Virginia, GED has any questions?

14 Okay, do you want them to come in, Evan, or Mike, do  
15 we take these in a block or do them one at a time?

16 MR. FEINMAN: I think it's just as easy to take it in a  
17 block.

18 MS. COLEMAN: Could we have a motion then that the  
19 Staff recommendation with respect to Grant Number 3279 and  
20 the Staff recommendation with respect to Grant Number 3270 be  
21 approved?

22 DR. EHRHARDT: So moved.

23 MS. RATLIFF: Second it.

24 MS. COLEMAN: Okay, who moved?

25 MS. EHRHARDT: Alexis.

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MS. COLEMAN: Alexis, thank you, and thank you, Sandy. Okay. Any further comments before we vote? All right, all in favor, say aye. (Ayes). Opposed? (No response). Abstentions? (No response). Okay, well, that takes care of that piece of business.

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The next item on the agenda is an update on the Talent Attraction Program, one of my favorite things. Stephanie, I'm turning it over to you.

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MS. KIM: I just wanted to give you an update, and I don't have any pretty graphs or anything because we really just sent out award letters yesterday and the Department of Health just sent me their list last night. If you recall, we put our Talent Attraction Program money between two different programs. One is with the Virginia Department of Health targeted for health professionals, and the other one is the one we administer, which is basically not health professionals.

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Just to give you an update on the Department of Health Program. If you recall, we were at \$2 million in 2020, and then they just awarded one-and-a-half million dollars for this year. There were 22 recipients that were awarded the one-and-a-half million, and just to give you an idea of the applications, there were two medical doctors, one physician assistant, eight nurse practitioners, one registered nurse, one dentist, three pharmacists, and six counselors and behavioral health and family

1 counseling. Those were awards that were made. They are two-  
2 year commitments from these professionals who will stay in the  
3 area for at least two years and hopefully longer.

4 Then, in our Talent Attraction Program, which is  
5 targeted more towards everything from speech, physical  
6 therapists, occupational therapists to computer engineers,  
7 teachers, especially in the STEM area or special ed. We awarded  
8 \$1.6 million in 2019 and \$1.2 million last year, and we just made  
9 an award yesterday for another, let's see, \$1.3 million for 81  
10 awards. The average two-year commitment award is for  
11 \$15,500. These 81 applicants had \$4.7 million in student loan  
12 debt. So, we're not covering all that, but we're putting a dent in  
13 it, and there are several hundred applicants, and 81 received  
14 awards.

15 Just to give you an idea about the applications, 44  
16 were teachers, special ed., and STEM and career and technical  
17 education. Twenty-four were occupational therapists, physical  
18 therapists, a speech language pathologist; 13 were in the  
19 computer IT engineering area. That's just to give you an idea of  
20 how that's going.

21 The awards from 2019 had the first payments made,  
22 we have already disbursed like the first half, about \$681,000 for  
23 that very first round in 2019, so we were just starting to do the  
24 payments, first payments for 2020 now. Any questions?

25 MS. COLEMAN: Stephanie, remind me of the wages.

1 MS. KIM: So, for the Talent Attraction Program for  
2 the teachers at PTOT is up to \$12,000 per year for a two-year  
3 commitment with the option to renew for an additional two years  
4 for \$12,000. So, they can receive up to \$48,000. We do base it  
5 on, you know, there are some essay responses we asked for, and  
6 also based on loan balances, so we kind of take that all into  
7 consideration when making the award.

8 MS. COLEMAN: Questions for Stephanie?

9 MR. SHELL: I just wanted to ask have you seen a  
10 large impact from the awards that were given, has it drawn a lot  
11 of people to the area?

12 MS. COLEMAN: I'm sorry, I can't see, who's speaking,  
13 I couldn't see who's speaking.

14 MR. SHELL: This is Cecil.

15 MS. COLEMAN: Oh, hi, Cecil, thank you.

16 MS. KIM: It's hard to tell at this point because we just  
17 paid out the first year for the 2019 awards, so it's a little bit hard  
18 to say. I will say that the majority of recipients are from the  
19 area, there may be a couple that were outside the area that we  
20 attracted in, but, generally speaking, these are people who grew  
21 up in the region and are returning after college to work in the  
22 region. We did change the program after the first year to be  
23 forward looking, so we are accepting people who will be  
24 graduating through the end of this year. So, hopefully, when  
25 they graduate they can make the decision to move to the area if

1 they're not from the area originally.

2 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Stephanie. Anyone else?  
3 This is a great program, a great future for the Region, I think.  
4 Thank you very much.

5 MS. KIM: We have received a number of letters from  
6 recipients who really genuinely appreciate the program.

7 MS. COLEMAN: I should think, that's a lot of money.

8 Moving on to the G3 Update, and this is of interest to  
9 us right now. The G3 Program validates tremendously the work  
10 that we've been doing with our workforce. The WFA Program, so  
11 much of what we have covered, this program covers, too, and it  
12 behooves us to understand what the impact and implications of  
13 the G3 are for the WFA. So, hopefully, we'll learn something and  
14 we'll welcome Randall Stamper. Are you here, Randall?

15 MR. STAMPER: I am, Madam Chair, thank you.

16 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. Randall is a VCCS  
17 Assistant Vice Chancellor for Grants and Federal Workforce  
18 Programs.

19 MR. STAMPER: Would it be all right for me to share  
20 my screen for a short presentation?

21 MS. COLEMAN: Absolutely.

22 MR. STAMPER: I'll bring that up. Can you all see  
23 that? Hopefully, you can see just the slides themselves. So, first  
24 and foremost, Madam Chair and members of the Committee,  
25 thank you for the invitation today, I appreciate it, and everybody

1 at VCCS appreciate the opportunity to share some information  
2 about the G3 with you.

3 As most of you probably know, in the 2020 General  
4 Assembly, G3 was funded in the budget bill, but I think it was on  
5 the day that the bill was signed we also shut down due to COVID  
6 and all new funding for state initiatives were final, allocated. So,  
7 in this past General Assembly, the funding was reinserted into  
8 the budget and there was actually a bill that was passed in the  
9 Court of Virginia to outline the program.

10 So, I'll give you a little bit of background today, the  
11 basics of the program and then some next steps that we're  
12 anticipating in the coming months. So, G3, as you know, get  
13 skills, get a job and give back, is a state-funded college promise  
14 program that's different than most other state college promise  
15 programs in that it is solely focused on workforce development  
16 and it is limited in scope, both from an eligibility standpoint and a  
17 programmatic standpoint. It is for adult students. So, this is not  
18 about high school transfer students, it is adult students who are  
19 looking to go into the workforce or to upgrade their skills,  
20 improve their situation in the workforce.

21 There are some eligibility thresholds both to enroll in  
22 the program, to remain funded in the program. You have to  
23 qualify for an in-state tuition and manner by which you assess  
24 that, filling out the federal student financial aid application.  
25 Individuals have to be at 400 percent poverty or below in order

1 to be eligible, which for a family of four equates to roughly  
2 \$100,000 a year, so it's for low and middle income individuals. If  
3 you're enrolled in a credit program, you must enroll at least half  
4 time, which is six credit hours, and then address in a satisfactory  
5 manner, which for proxy we could use is having a 2.0 GPA or  
6 higher as you move through the program.

7           And then finally, as I said, it is limited to a certain  
8 number of industry areas, so, health care, information  
9 technology, the skill trades broadly, early childhood education,  
10 and public safety. Within the budget bill, it becomes even more  
11 specific in that college programs are categorized by what are  
12 called SIP codes, and the specific SIP codes that are supported  
13 by G3 funding are entered within the budget. There is a process  
14 whereby we can revisit that from year to year as the economy  
15 changes and new programs come online. We anticipate the July  
16 1<sup>st</sup>, the specific programs are spelled out.

17           So, what does it actually look like? Those of you went  
18 to college, I'm sure you remember that in the first couple of  
19 semesters you generally got your Gen. Ed. courses, English 101  
20 or 102, Math 125, your psychology electives, whatever that  
21 might be. In 2019, in anticipation of the passage of G3, we  
22 worked with all our colleges to what we call a Flips Curriculum.  
23 So, we took Associate Degree programs that leads to an  
24 Associate of Applied Science, and we've gone over all the really  
25 technical focus skills, those were to the front of the curriculum

1 and moved the Gen Ed requirements to the back of the  
2 curriculum, except in most cases where Math 125 was  
3 appropriate for a particular program. So, that individuals will  
4 come into the Level 1 and get the industry's specific skills that  
5 will allow them to enter into work, whether that's through a  
6 credit program or through a math credit fast-forward program.  
7 The initial stage is really getting them work ready in their  
8 particular field.

9           And then when they come back for Level 2, if they do,  
10 they get a noncredit fast-forward credential. We assign credit or  
11 award credit for those credentials that they've gotten and then  
12 give them a little longer termed credential, and then finally over  
13 the course of their career when they come back to us again, we  
14 move them into an Associate's degree. So, the design is really to  
15 address working adults who want to advance in their career but  
16 don't have the time or the money or the luxury, you know, with  
17 kids and jobs and such, to just sign on for two years or three  
18 years to get an Associate's degree.

19           So, as I said, we've been working on this for about  
20 two years now and the colleges have gone through a revision of  
21 their curriculum and new programs and then a submission to our  
22 State Board for approval. We have about 1,500 programs right  
23 now that have been approved for the G3 fund. That's both the  
24 Credit Degree Programs, Certificate Programs, both Diploma  
25 Programs, and then, as you see, there are a little over 500 of the

1 shorter term credentials that lead to employment, which will be  
2 of value when they come back in and enroll.

3 How does it work? G3 funds are last dollar.  
4 Everybody's funds in my world are last dollar, but G3 funds are  
5 last, last, last dollar. So, students need to fill out the fast set,  
6 find out what kind of Pell support they might qualify for. And if  
7 they do not qualify for their course of study, then the G3 funds  
8 come in and make it the difference, as well as paying for books  
9 and other fees.

10 If they're enrolling in noncredit programs, fast forward  
11 a short-term program, we have a much simpler application that  
12 identifies individuals who are eligible for some state aid to cover  
13 the first third of the tuition that they are owed. If they do not  
14 qualify for that or if that does not cover all of their expenses,  
15 then G3 comes in and makes up the difference.

16 Then those individuals who do go full-time get a full  
17 Pell award, the law provides for a student incentive grant. So,  
18 we know that many of our students and most of our students are  
19 not traditional college students, they're working, they are older.  
20 They have dependents. So, if they have what it takes and are  
21 willing to commit full-time, the law provides a student incentive  
22 grant, which amounts to about, I think it's about \$2,300 per  
23 year, and that's broken up by semester. The true cost of getting  
24 to and from campus, maintaining their car, those sorts of things  
25 in order to ideally insure that they complete.

1           So, what are the benefits to the Commonwealth? This  
2 has, you know, significant, significant support among business,  
3 the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, because, you know, it does  
4 two things. It fills employer needs, you know, by training  
5 individuals in specific areas, where we struggle to hire, and it  
6 also increases individual incomes of the 1,500 programs that I  
7 mentioned earlier. We took a look at the data and matched with  
8 our Virginia Employment Commission and folks over the last five  
9 years who have completed those programs see an average bump  
10 above 60 percent in wages, so that the Commonwealth, from its  
11 general fund revenue, and benefits businesses by providing them  
12 the help that they desperately need.

13           So, we will launch our first students in G3 Programs  
14 on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The funding is 34-and-a-half million dollars, and we  
15 expect that we will fully use those funds very quickly across 23  
16 colleges. So, we'll see how we can stretch the funding and what  
17 kind of impact it has. But right now, our colleges are promoting  
18 this, we had a little meeting last Friday with all of our academic,  
19 the presidents and financial aid folks, so students are enrolling  
20 right now in these programs, and we are very excited to see  
21 what comes next. Thank you for your time. I do appreciate it, I  
22 hope I didn't take too much of it.

23           MS. COLEMAN: That was great information. I know  
24 there'll be questions. Who has a question from the Committee  
25 for Randy?

1 DR. EHRHARDT: Madam Chair, just a request. If  
2 there's any way that we can help to market this information, I  
3 know certainly we would be happy to do that in Danville,  
4 Pittsylvania, and we can talk to the folks at VCC, but if there is  
5 system information, we can share it with our state association  
6 throughout the members. So, if we can be helpful there, just let  
7 us know.

8 MR. STAMPER: Absolutely. We greatly appreciate the  
9 offer, and we set aside a little bit of money for a statewide  
10 marketing campaign in concert with the college's campaign. If  
11 you wouldn't mind dropping me an email, I will connect you with  
12 the individual in my office who's going to be conducting that or  
13 will be able to provide you a wealth of material to use to help  
14 support the rollout.

15 DR. EHRHARDT: That would be great. I'll email you  
16 today. Thanks, Randy.

17 MR. STAMPER: Appreciate it.

18 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Randy. Other questions  
19 from the Committee?

20 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chair, I'll just add that if I can  
21 let my dog in, that this will have a significant impact on the way  
22 this Committee should think about its Workforce Financial Aid  
23 plans for the forthcoming year. In many ways, G3 has stepped  
24 into the shoes of the Commission. I spoke earlier about a prior  
25 Commission project that was ultimately picked up by the General

1 Assembly and taken statewide, and here is a second. It in many  
2 ways mirrors the Workforce Financial Aid work that we were  
3 doing.

4 With your permission, Madam Chairwoman, I would  
5 suggest that we schedule a meeting over the summer so that the  
6 Committee can get together, analyze the extent to which G3 has  
7 duplicated our Workforce Financial Aid effort and then determine  
8 how we might better, you know, repack those funds to support  
9 the broader Workforce mission of the Committee.

10 MS. COLEMAN: I think that's a great idea, Evan. And  
11 the Committee should be aware that the Executive Committee  
12 adopted a budget that includes, I think it's \$2 million for WSA as  
13 opposed to \$2,700,000 from the previous year. I think I'm right  
14 about that. We reduced it, not knowing really whether we  
15 reduced it enough or we reduced it too much. We need to see  
16 how the program plays out, and then if we need it to add money  
17 back, we could, the Committee can do that. But, yes, we  
18 definitely need to revisit this.

19 In your presentation, I was looking for ways in which  
20 G3 and WSA might be distinguished from each other. I was  
21 wondering, I thought I understood you to say that working adult  
22 students would qualify, but not have to transfer, I'm not sure  
23 exactly what that means. Can you be more specific?

24 MR. STAMPER: Sure. So, to put it as briefly as  
25 possible, individual students who are enrolled in dual enrollment,

1 so, they're a high school student and they're taking classes at  
2 the college or maybe they're taking college-level classes at the  
3 high school, they are not eligible for this. This is specifically for  
4 adults who are in the workforce or seeking to enter the  
5 workforce.

6 MS. COLEMAN: Okay. The high school graduates.  
7 Any further questions?

8 MR. CUNNINGHAM: G3 targets students all over the  
9 state?

10 MR. STAMPER: That is correct. All 23 colleges will  
11 receive the allocation, \$34.5 million to serve the students in  
12 those five areas with the understanding that the demand, region  
13 by region, may look different. So, while the Tidewater Region  
14 may do a heck of a lot of trade and manufacturing around the  
15 shipbuilding industry and those sorts of things, you know, that  
16 we might see a lot more health care programs being employed,  
17 but, yes, ultimately developing this thing.

18 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

19 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Joel and Randy.

20 Other questions? Well, is there anyone from one of  
21 our institutions who would like to ask a question or make a  
22 comment? Okay, I believe that does it for us. We now have a  
23 period of open comment.

24 MR. STAMPER: Madam chair, I'm going to log off and  
25 head to my next meeting. Thank you all very much for your time

1 today, appreciate it.

2 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Randy, we appreciate it,  
3 really appreciate it.

4 Anyone else? Yes?

5 MR. SCARCE: Madam Chair, I appreciate your time. I  
6 spoke earlier at the Incentives Committee meeting. My name is  
7 Brad Scarce, and I am sitting in South Boston, Virginia. My wife  
8 and I opened a small medical clinic, which was for profit from  
9 scratch in the small town of Halifax, Virginia.

10 We were really disheartened to discover that there are  
11 zero state, local, or federal incentives for any for-profit medical  
12 clinics in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She couldn't work  
13 there, if she were to get loan forgiveness under the VDH  
14 program, since it was deferred from TAP, you had to work in a  
15 nonprofit. You also can't own the clinic, so there's no long-term  
16 commitment, and you also can't combine it with your equity line  
17 to write off the interest and to lower your payments. So, you  
18 become ineligible for all three of those based on what we did.

19 We did start a nonprofit, and I'm not sure who on this  
20 Committee would serve on a nonprofit board that doesn't exist.  
21 You know, nobody wants to sit there for the logistics and the  
22 back and leg work to start it. So, we started as a for-profit clinic,  
23 and I'm not sure why that's a problem for any committee  
24 because the only way we were able to do this clinic was because  
25 I had a business that was pretty profitable.

1           So, we re-invested it because her goal was to open a  
2 rural medical clinic in her hometown, and she did. And her father  
3 and grandfather were tobacco farmers. And the clinic is actually  
4 named in honor of her tobacco father.

5           So, anyway, I understand the parameters, but I just  
6 wish there were more exceptions because we're still a federally  
7 designated medically underserved area and we have been for  
8 four decades. And I believe that we should open up incentives  
9 for for-profit ventures and shouldn't matter where you work. If  
10 the goal was to have more providers in our area, then open it up  
11 to everybody. And I appreciate your time. Thank you very  
12 much.

13           MS. COLEMAN: We certainly appreciate your  
14 perspective, and you're way past my area of expertise. If there's  
15 anyone on Staff that would like to speak to that, you're certainly  
16 welcome.

17           MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chairwoman, Mr. Scarce, the  
18 only thing I can say that we have very little health care expertise  
19 on staff, as well, which is why we defer to the Department of  
20 Health to run the health profession side of our Talent Attraction  
21 Program. We will relay to them your concern and, you know, we  
22 will also reconsider it as we approach next year's Talent  
23 Attraction Program.

24           MR. SCARCE: I appreciate that very much. I've  
25 already spoken multiple times, all of that at the VDH, they

1 referred me back to the Tobacco Commission, and actually then  
2 referred back to the House of Delegates. A handful of members  
3 are sitting in this room. I've spoken to my federal congressman,  
4 Health and Human Resources, the assistant director of the USDA.  
5 The reason it's fallen through the cracks is because nobody will  
6 hear of it and I understand there's not medical expertise. All I'm  
7 saying is they are saying that they are having a problem  
8 recruiting people, I would submit in my opinion, not theirs, is  
9 that they're having a problem retaining them, not recruiting  
10 them, because people are not invested in the community. If they  
11 don't have to stay two years, you know, you're debt free, you  
12 can go anywhere in the world if you've got two years' experience.

13 We started from scratch because we wanted to, you  
14 know, we can go anywhere, too, she wanted to do it here, and  
15 we're not eligible because of that. It just defies logic in my  
16 opinion, and I'm sorry to vent to you, but I appreciate your  
17 understanding. It's not going to help us clearly. She graduated  
18 in 2018. I'm on this call because I believe other people want to  
19 locate in the area and there should be incentive. You've got to  
20 spend less money each year under the TAP Program. You  
21 actually should be spending more if we're trying to move away  
22 from being a federally-designated area, yet we're going in the  
23 wrong direction.

24 Anyway, I talk way too much. Thank you for your  
25 time.

1 MR. FEINMAN: I hear you. We have a few other  
2 items that we want to cover with VDH before we talk to them  
3 again next year, and so I think that that'll certainly be on the list.

4 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you both very much. Any  
5 other public comment? I don't see any or hear any. Therefore, I  
6 will accept a motion to adjourn.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: So moved.

8 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. Second?

9 MS. RATLIFF: Second.

10 MS. COLEMAN: All in favor? (Ayes).  
11 Thank you very much.

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14 **PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED.**

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**CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER**

I, Medford W. Howard, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large, do hereby certify that I was the Court Reporter who took down and transcribed the proceedings of the **Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, Education Committee Meeting**, when held on Thursday, May 27, 2021, at 1:30 o'clock p.m., (By Electronic Conference Call).

I further certify this is a true and accurate transcript, to the best of my ability to hear and understand the proceedings.

Given under my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of June, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_

Medford W. Howard

CCR