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## VBREE Regional Initiative

### Executive Summary

#### Background

The Virginia Business Roundtable for Early Education (VBREE) was founded in 2023 as an advisory committee to VECF's Board of Directors with the belief that Virginia's prosperity and quality of life are inextricably dependent upon a strong early childhood care and education system. VBREE's mission is to sustain and grow, through strategic financing and innovation, the supply of high quality, affordable and accessible child care, driving critical and multi-faceted benefits for the Commonwealth.

Launched in 2024 to support VBREE efforts, the Shovel Ready Virginia Task Force sought to more deeply understand the root causes of persistent gaps in child care supply, specifically in (1) the physical spaces (environments, classrooms, and facilities) and (2) the early educator pipeline. After conducting a 12-month exploration of strategies and solutions that specifically address these gaps, the Task Force issued a [report in July 2025](#) outlining recommendations to advance VBREE priorities for child care progress across all regions in Virginia.

#### VBREE Regional Initiative Overview

The VBREE Regional Initiative harnesses the power of cross-industry regional leaders to identify and implement regional solutions to child care challenges. The VBREE Regional Initiative creates a unified structure for progress toward implementing the Task Force report recommendations across regions. The report recommends a three-phase approach for the Initiative, building toward a certification that clearly demonstrates regions' commitment that *"We mean business with child care."* The Initiative is designed to be a key contributor to the strength of Virginia's economy, workforce competitiveness, and ranking as top in the nation for business.

#### Priority Goals

The VBREE Regional Initiative creates a unified structure for progress across regions toward priority goals to:

- ◆ **Promote child care** as essential to Virginia's modern economy and quality of life priorities.
- ◆ **Accelerate the expanded supply** classrooms, sites, and environments to deliver game-changing child care services.
- ◆ **Substantially upgrade the capabilities** within the child care industry and the stature of the early educator profession.

#### Vision

The vision for the VBREE Regional Initiative is that all regions across Virginia have the capacity to drive the triple-bottom line return on investment of school-ready children, work-ready families, and business-ready communities.

#### Mission

The VBREE Regional Initiative fosters broad regional collaboration and aligned commitment to elevate child care as infrastructure, expand the supply of quality child care, and strengthen the capabilities of the child care industry and stature of the early educator profession.

## Strategies

The Task Force report charges VBREE with implementing and guiding the new VBREE Regional Initiative work through three strategic phases:

### 1. Get Ready – Mobilize regional delegations with comprehensive representation

Bring together the power of business, government, economic and workforce development, and philanthropic leaders to leverage existing statewide and regional structures, mobilize commitment to child care as infrastructure, and inform new innovations and partnerships through the full formation of VBREE regional delegations and signed statements of commitment.

### 2. Get Set – Build will and collective action for VBREE Regional Initiative strategies

Secure common understanding of regional child care infrastructure and mobilize cross-sector action to address specific challenges, leverage unique opportunities, and yield returns through development of Regional Action Plans.

### 3. Get Going – Implement Regional Action Plans and strive toward regional Certification

Incentivize and recognize the accomplishment of certain actions that reflect commitment to and progress toward advancing the task force report recommendations through a regional Business-Forward/Child Care-Friendly Certification.

## Resources

The VBREE Regional Initiative provides support to Ready Region leads through the following resources:

- Playbook for Regions: Central (open-source) toolbox of guidance and resources to accelerate coordinated and cohesive progress toward the priority goals across all regions.
- Regional Action Plan Community of Practice (CoP): Monthly facilitated CoP to support Ready Regions with the development of their VBREE landscape analysis and Regional Action Plans.
- Office Hours: Monthly Office Hours with VECF President and Ready Region CEOs to discuss the development and full formation of the regional delegation and make connections between the regional and state-level VBREE initiatives.
- Regional Data: Comprehensive data assets to help understand root causes of child care supply challenges.
- Operational Funding: Funding to support Ready Regions with operation and administration of the VBREE Regional Initiative.

## Anticipated Timeline

|               |                                                                             |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 1, 2025  | Launch of VBREE Regional Initiative                                         |
| Jan. 1, 2026  | Release of VBREE Playbook for Regions (1.0)                                 |
| June 30, 2026 | Full formation of regional delegations                                      |
| June 30, 2026 | Formalization of statements of commitment                                   |
| June 30, 2027 | Completion of landscape analysis and development of Regional Action Plans   |
| Ongoing       | Progress toward regional Business Forward/Child Care Friendly Certification |

## **Guidance for Strategic Phases**

### **1. Get Ready – Mobilize regional delegations with comprehensive representation**

VBREE Regional Delegations are designed to bring together the power of senior regional leaders to deliver on the triple bottom line return on investment of school-ready children, work-ready parents, and business-ready communities.

#### **Deliverable: VBREE Regional Delegation**

VBREE Regional Delegations are convened by Ready Region lead agencies and made up of cross-industry regional leaders to identify and implement regional solutions to regional child care challenges. Regional Delegations must include at least one senior representative from each of the following categories, within the designated Ready Region footprint:

- Businesses/Employers (3)
- Economic Development Agency
- Local or Regional Chamber of Commerce
- GO Virginia Regional Council
- Workforce Development Agency (including higher education)
- Planning District Commission
- Philanthropic Organization

#### **Timeline & Expectations**

- ✓ Regional level: Each VBREE regional delegation is fully formed no later than June 30, 2026.
- ✓ State level: As outlined in by-laws, VECF/VBREE approves and may assist with recommendations and connections for senior representatives from relevant categories for the full formation of each regional delegation. VECF/VBREE advisory committee will guide the responsibilities and expectations for representatives and their organizations, and ensure access to government relations and other necessary services. VECF will provide technical assistance for Ready Regions' facilitation of their delegations' engagement once the delegations are fully formed.
- ✓ VECF Board of Directors: At least one senior representative from each VBREE Regional Delegation will serve on the VECF Board of Directors to ensure regional representation on the state-level VBREE leadership group.

#### **Resources**

- Recommendations and connections for delegation members
- Delegation meeting kick-off and ongoing facilitation materials
- Government relations support

#### **Deliverable: Statement of Commitment**

Once fully formed, each VBREE Regional Delegation is expected to complete a statement of commitment to incorporate the VBREE Regional Initiative mission and vision as priorities in all the region's strategic, economic, and workforce development plans. The statements are signed by a senior leader of each region and submitted to VECF.

#### **Timeline & Expectations**

- ✓ Regional level: No later than June 30, 2026, each VBREE regional delegation will sign and agree to a statement of commitment toward achieving the VBREE Regional Initiative mission and vision.
- ✓ State level: VECF/VBREE will provide a template for the statement of commitment.

#### **Resources**

- Template for statement of commitment

## 2. Get Set – Build will and collective action for VBREE Regional Initiative strategies

Each region reflects a unique landscape of child care supply building challenges and opportunities. Regional syntheses across Virginia will allow for a common understanding of the current state and help mobilize aligned, collective commitment to the implementation of Regional Action Plans to address specific challenges and yield returns in each region. Regional Action Plans will leverage the findings of the landscape analysis to define the gaps, frame the problem, chart a course of action, identify enabling success factors, and define measures of success toward goals.

### **Deliverable: Regional Action Plan**

Each VBREE regional delegation is expected to conduct a landscape analysis to determine the major child care supply challenges and opportunities in the region and develop a Regional Action Plan based on the findings. The Regional Action Plans focus on achieving the vision and mission of the VBREE Regional Initiative and, at a minimum, include:

- Results of the landscape analysis, including the potential root causes of the region's child care challenges and existing regional innovations
- Development of objectives, strategies, and initiatives to address findings from the landscape analysis that move the region toward the VBREE Regional Initiative vision
- Timeline for implementation of the Regional Action Plan
- Resources needed for success of the objectives and strategies
- Indicators to track success and progress toward goals

### **Timeline & Expectations**

- ✓ **Regional level:** By June 30, 2027, each VBREE regional delegation is expected to have developed a current state landscape analysis and a Regional Action Plan incorporating child care challenges, opportunities, and the vision of the VBREE Regional Initiative.
- ✓ **State level:** VECF/VBREE will provide a toolkit for the landscape analysis and a template for the Regional Action Plan, as well as tools, technical assistance, and links to expertise for component requirements. VECF/VBREE will work with regional delegations to identify indicators and to track and monitor progress toward goals, including timeline milestones.

### **Resources**

- Facilitated Community of Practice (CoP) to support regional delegation leads with guidance, problem-solving, brainstorming, and peer learning
- Playbook for Regions with briefs, case studies, tools, and data resources
- Regional Action Plan guidance and template, including framework and process for the strategic plan with sections focused on defining child care gaps, identifying root causes, proposing actionable strategies, outlining conditions for success, and specifying metrics to track progress
- Tools, technical assistance, sample surveys, and links to expertise for landscape analysis and Regional Action Plan development
- Data and methodologies for understanding current state
- Support with indicators and to track and monitor progress toward goals, including timeline milestones

### 3. Get Going – Implement Regional Action Plans and strive toward regional Certification

VBREE Regional Delegations are incentivized to strive to achieve the VBREE Business-Forward/Child Care-Friendly Certification. This Certification recognizes the accomplishment of certain actions reflecting the region's commitment to and progress toward addressing child care challenges that present a risk to Virginia's economy, workforce competitiveness, and ranking as top in the nation for businesses. A Certified region has achieved the VBREE Regional Initiative's goals of elevating child care as infrastructure, expanding the supply of quality child care, and strengthening the capabilities of the child care industry.

As a result of being awarded as Certified, VBREE regional delegations can expect to receive several key benefits for being designated a Business-Forward/Child Care Friendly region.

- Marketing materials and press release
- Certification recognition and appeal to attract businesses and families
- Preferential access to resources and funding, as available
- Regional outcomes for school-ready children, work-ready families, and business-ready communities

#### **Deliverable: Regional Certification**

The Certification is awarded based on the accomplishment of specific, statewide Certification criteria that are associated with the achievement of outcomes that advance the overall goals of the VBREE Regional Initiative. To become Certified, VBREE regional delegations must demonstrate actions that achieve the three Certification criteria within each priority area of the VBREE Regional Initiative: elevate child care as infrastructure, expand the supply of quality child care, and strengthen the capabilities of the child care industry.

#### **Timeline & Expectations**

- ✓ **Regional level:** VBREE regional delegations will continue to work toward the accomplishment of achieving the Certification over a five-year period, as part of the implementation of their Regional Action Plans. VBREE regional delegations will complete an initial application for consideration of Certification award. Regional delegations maintain certification status through progress updates and review by VECF/VBREE.
- ✓ **State level:** VECF/VBREE, in partnership with the regional delegations, will establish the criteria for Certification as well as the monitoring process for achievement, progress, and recertification. VECF/VBREE will review the initial application and subsequent updates from regional delegations to maintain their Certification standing.

#### **Resources**

- Certification criteria and application process
- Toolkits, talking points, and marketing materials
- FAQ document with information on commonly asked questions and suggested talking point responses