

Review of Get Skilled, Get a Job, Get Ahead (G3) Programs Aligned with 2026 High Demand Occupations

Overview

Chapter 725 of the 2025 Virginia Acts of Assembly (Item 201) requires the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) to annually evaluate skills and training needed for Virginians to fill jobs available in certified regional council areas. Based on the evaluation, VOEE is required to “make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on what programs should be offered in each region that qualify for financial assistance under the G3 [Get Skilled, Get a Job, Get Ahead] program” that is administered by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

To complete this review, VOEE identified degree and certificate programs offered by VCCS that align to jobs based on the 2026 High Demand Occupations list approved by the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. VOEE then compared the programs to the list of currently approved G3 programs listed in Item 201, Chapter 725 of the 2025 Virginia Acts of Assembly and identified the following:

- **Additional programs to be considered G3 eligible:** Programs aligned to a 2026 high demand occupation and are not currently eligible.
 - This includes three programs: Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician, Funeral Service and Mortuary Science; General, and Sterile Processing Technology/Technician.
- **G3 programs requiring technical adjustment:** Programs that require a technical update to their reference in the eligibility list.
 - This includes two programs: Forensic Science and Technology and Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant.
- **G3 programs to be considered for removal:** Programs that are currently G3 eligible but are not aligned with a 2026 high demand occupation. These programs had no awards in academic year (AY) 2024-25.
 - This includes two programs: Family and Community Services and Physician Associate/Assistant.

The following report provides an overview of the methodology used to review programs eligible for G3 funding and recommendations for programs to add, remove, and technically adjust. In addition, VOEE identified several programs that require further review to better assess their eligibility. VOEE will review these programs in the coming year in partnership with VCCS and additional stakeholders to determine if they should be included in a future report.

Methodology

The methodology to identify and recommend degree and certificate programs offered through G3 included several sources of data and analysis.

Identification of Jobs Needed in Virginia

The determination of jobs needed in Virginia is based on occupations identified as high demand by the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (the Workforce Board). The most recent high demand occupations were approved in December 2025 for the 2026-2027 biennium. This list is commonly referred to as the 2026 High Demand Occupations list. Occupations are categorized based on their Standard Occupation Code (SOC) as determined by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The 2026 High Demand Occupations list is based on the following criteria:

- Occupation growth at stable or higher (-0.5% and higher from 2025-2030), and
- At least 100 average openings, and
- Typical entry-level education at or below a bachelor's degree, and
- Median annual earnings of at least \$31,300, or
- At least 10 apprenticeships initiated since 2020

Based on the initial criteria list above, one occupation, bookkeeping, had declining growth but a significantly high number of openings. As a result, the Workforce Board approved an exception for this occupation and maintained it on the 2026 High Demand Occupations list.

To identify jobs available in certified council regions, VOEE used the nine certified Growth and Opportunity (GO) Virginia regions. A full list of cities and counties included in these regions is available on the GO Virginia [website](#).

Identification of degree and certificate programs offered by VCCS

Degree and certificate programs are categorized by the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). VOEE reviewed VCCS enrollment and awards data provided by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) based on their CIP code. In addition, VOEE reviewed degree and certificate programs that are approved by SCHEV to be offered by VCCS. This list is maintained on the research.schev.edu website and is commonly referred to as the degree inventory. As a note, for the purposes of this review, VOEE focused on degree and certificate programs. VOEE is in the process of working with SCHEV and VCCS to further review programs aligned through the Workforce Credential Grant program (branded as FastForward by VCCS). These credentials are required to align with high demand fields as specified in §23.1-627.3 of the Code of Virginia.

Alignment of degree and certificate programs to high demand occupations

To align degree and certificate programs with high demand occupations, VOEE applied a modified version of the NCES CIP-to-SOC crosswalk. This crosswalk starts with the CIP-SOC mappings from

NCES and adds additional program-to-occupation links for production occupations (SOC group 51) based on a framework developed by Lightcast, a labor market analytics partner.

Once the programs were mapped to high demand occupations, VOEE identified programs to be considered for addition to the G3 program based on the following criteria: (1) they are not currently eligible for G3 funding, (2) they are aligned to a 2026 high demand occupation, (3) they have a typical entry-level education of more than a high school diploma and less than a bachelor's degree, and (4) they had awards or enrollments in academic year (AY) 2024-25. Programs were then reviewed if they are currently listed as G3 eligible but did not meet the additional criteria as 2026 high demand, typical entry-level education requirements, or enrollments or awards in AY 2024-25.

VOEE then reviewed the analysis and programs with VCCS staff to gain additional input.

Recommendations

Additional Programs to be Considered G3 Eligible

VOEE recommends that three programs be considered for addition: Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician; Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General; and Sterile Processing Technology/Technician. These programs are aligned with a 2026 high demand occupation but are not currently offered under the G3 program. Table 1 provides the program name and its CIP code, total annual awards in AY 2024-25, the aligned 2026 high demand occupation and its SOC code, the typical entry-level education, and the projected annual job openings and growth of the occupation.

Table 1
Additional Programs to be Considered G3 Eligible

Program (CIP)	All Awards AY 2024-25*	Aligned 2026 High Demand Occupation (SOC)	Typical Entry-level Education	Projected Avg. Annual Job Openings (2025-30)	Projected Growth % (2025-30)
Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician (47.0608)	9	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians (49-3011)	Postsecondary nondegree award	567	2.7
Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General (12.0301)	69	Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (39-4031)	Associate's degree	109	5.5

Sterile Processing Technology/Technician (51.1012)	2	Surgical Technologists (29-2055)	Postsecondary nondegree award	168	4.3
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*Individuals must meet several requirements to be eligible for G3 funding, including an income threshold of no more than 400% of the federal poverty threshold and a course load minimum of 6 credit hours. The award totals serve as a reference for the current program size. The fiscal impact of adding these programs would need to be estimated by VCCS based on the enrollment of G3 eligible students.

Two of the programs, Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician and Sterile Processing Technology/Technician have similar existing G3 programs that align with the same high demand occupation. This includes Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician and Surgical Technology/Technologist. See Appendix A for data related to community colleges offering or approved to provide these programs, similar existing G3 programs that are aligned, and job opening projections based on the GO Virginia regions.

G3 Programs Requiring Technical Adjustment

The Forensic Science and Technology and Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant programs are suggested for technical adjustment. The associated CIP codes for these G3 programs listed in the budget are currently aligned with the 2010 CIP taxonomy and should be updated to reflect the 2020 CIP taxonomy as published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). VCCS issued the respective awards in AY 2024-25 under the 2020 CIP code.

Table 2
G3 Programs Requiring a Technical Adjustment

Program	2010 CIP	2020 CIP
Forensic Science and Technology	43.0106	43.0406
Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant	51.0808	01.8301

G3 Programs to be Considered for Removal

VOEE identified two G3 programs for consideration for removal: Family and Community Services and Physician Assistant/Associate. These programs are aligned to occupations that have a typical entry-level education of a master's degree, which are not included as part of the 2026 high demand occupations criteria. In addition, there were no awards for these programs in AY 2024-25, and the programs are not listed in the degree inventory provided by SCHEV.

Table 3
Programs to be Considered for Removal

Program (CIP)	Aligned Occupation (SOC)	Typical Entry-level Education	Projected Avg. Annual Job Openings (2025-30)	Projected Growth % (2025-30)
Family and Community Services (19.0707)	Farm and Home Management Educators (25-9021)	Master's degree	57	-1.0
Physician Associate/Assistant (51.0912)	Physician Assistant (29-1071)	Master's degree	407	16.0

Next Steps

The programs included in this report serve as recommendations by VOEE based on the alignment of the program to the 2026 High Demand Occupations list that was approved by the Virginia Board for Workforce Development; however, the determination of whether a program is included as G3 eligible is determined by the General Assembly as stated in Item 201, Chapter 725 of the 2025 Virginia Acts of Assembly (D.2.a): “All additions and changes to the eligible high-demand fields for which programs may be offered pursuant to this item shall be approved by the General Assembly prior to implementation.”

The VOEE analysis does not include other factors that may impact the determination of the General Assembly, such as funding availability. VOEE staff are available to provide any additional support and analysis to General Assembly members and staff to facilitate final determinations.

Finally, VOEE staff identified several programs that needed additional study due to additional factors that ranged from programs that aligned to a high demand occupation, but do not have any enrollments or awards, to programs that do not directly map to a high demand occupation but appear to meet high demand needs. VOEE discussed these programs with staff at VCCS. VCCS and VOEE will review these programs in the coming year to determine whether they should be considered in the next annual review.

Appendix A: Additional Data Related to Programs to be Considered as G3 Eligible

The following tables include data related to the three additional programs to be considered as G3 eligible, including the aligned high demand occupation, the institutions offering the program or approved to offer the program, existing similar G3 programs aligned to the same occupation, and select labor market information by GO Virginia regions for the respective occupation.

Tables 4 and 5 relate to the Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician program. Tables 6 and 7 relate to the Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General program. Tables 8 and 9 relate to the Sterile Processing Technology/Technician program.

Table 4

Institutions Offering Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician or a Similar Existing G3 Program

Program (CIP)	All Awards AY 2024-25*	Aligned 2026 High Demand Occupation (SOC)	Institutions Offering Program or Approved to Offer Program
Program to be considered: Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician (47.0608)	9	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians (49-3011)	Blue Ridge (9 awards), Danville (approved)
Existing similar G3 approved program: Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician (46.0707)	18	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians (49-3011)	Blue Ridge (18 awards), Danville (approved)

Table 5

Labor Market Information Aligned to Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians by GO Virginia Region

GO Virginia Region	2025 Jobs	Projected Growth % (2025-30)	Projected Avg. Annual Openings (2025-30)
Region 1	120	-2.88	10
Region 2	229	2.35	19
Region 3	81	-0.76	6
Region 4	593	0.13	46
Region 5	2,939	-6.24%	225
Region 6	158	-0.75%	13
Region 7	2,382	4.85%	206
Region 8	179	6.78%	16

Region 9	126	6.70%	12
Statewide	6,911	2.68	567

Table 6

Institutions Offering Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General or a Similar Existing G3 Program

Program (CIP)	All Awards AY 2024-25*	Aligned 2026 High Demand Occupation (SOC)	Institutions Offering Program or Approved to Offer Program
Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General (12.0301)	69	Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (39-4031)	Brightpoint (57 awards), Tidewater (12 awards)
No similar programs authorized as G3 eligible			

Table 7

Labor Market Information Aligned to Funeral and Mortuary Science, General by GO Virginia Region

GO Virginia Region	2025 Jobs	Projected Growth % (2025-30)	Projected Avg. Annual Openings (2025-30)
Region 1	80	14.09	12
Region 2	128	5.67	17
Region 3	46	0.53	6
Region 4	116	5.02	15
Region 5	99	3.32	12
Region 6	30	7.85	4
Region 7	80	-0.11	10
Region 8	48	3.30	6
Region 9	34	11.30	5
Statewide	665	5.55	109

Table 8Institutions Offering Sterile Processing Technology/Technician or a Similar Existing G3 Program

Program (CIP)	All Awards AY 2024-25*	Aligned 2026 High Demand Occupation (SOC)	Institutions Offering Program or Approved to Offer Program
Program to be considered: Sterile Processing Technology/Technician (51.1012)	2	Surgical Technologists (29-2055)	Reynolds (2 awards)
Existing similar G3 approved program: Surgical Technology/Technologist (51.0909)	32	Surgical Technologists (29-2055)	Reynolds (approved), Virginia Western (approved), Piedmont (7), Laurel Ridge (11), Virginia Western (14), Northern Virginia (approved), Bright Point (approved)

Table 9Labor Market Information Aligned to Sterile Processing Technology/Technician by GO Virginia Region

GO Virginia Region	2025 Jobs	Projected Growth % (2025-30)	Projected Avg. Annual Openings (2025-30)
Region 1	<10	-	1
Region 2	297	5.29	21
Region 3	24	12.49	2
Region 4	498	2.13	32
Region 5	585	1.87	37
Region 6	78	-0.27	5
Region 7	605	8.83	46
Region 8	156	3.19	10
Region 9	151	-2.94	9
Statewide	2,457	4.30	168