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**Talent Action Coalition**

# Executive Summary

As part of the Commonwealth-wide GO Virginia initiative, GO Virginia Region 2, covering the Lynchburg, New River Valley, and Roanoke Regions, has taken steps to identify opportunities for growth and diversification within the regional economy. Identifying talent development, attraction, and retention as a critical component of this growth, the region designated a Talent Action Coalition to develop strategies for increasing the region’s talent pool.



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Talent Attraction**  Drawing in talent from outside the region to fill necessary gaps in the local talent pool | **Talent Retention**  Maintaining the current talent base and limiting the turnover of workers leaving the region for opportunity. | **Talent Development**  Providing education and training opportunities to upskill existing talent in areas of demand by regional employers. |

To guide the work of the Coalition, a study was commissioned is to assess the region’s capacity for talent attraction and retention, identifying the strengths and challenges to developing talent in the region, and opportunities to leverage or improve current practices or create new initiatives. The study included input from more than 100 higher education professionals, business representatives, and young professionals through focus groups and interviews, and more than 1,100 regional postsecondary students and alumni through an online survey. The following themes about the region’s talent needs, strengths, challenges, and opportunities were uncovered.

Businesses across a variety of industries – Agriculture, Architecture, Automotive, Construction, Education, Energy Production, Healthcare, Finance, Insurance, Legal, Manufacturing, Technology, Warehousing – reported some common themes among hiring needs, including:

* In general, access to a larger talent pool, especially due to low unemployment
* Entry-level applicants with employability skills
* Professionals with 5-7 (or more) years of experience
* High-skilled talent
* Specialized skillsets, especially in IT and engineering

Stakeholders across the region had significant positive feedback about what it is like to live and work in Region 2 and the benefits that can be realized by attracting new talent. Some of the most commonly identified regional strengths include:

* Natural beauty of the area
* Mix of both metro and rural areas
* Close-knit communities
* Outdoor recreation
* Close access and transportation to larger metropolitan areas
* Cost of living
* Safety
* Civic engagement opportunities
* Strong postsecondary institutions
* Openness to community development

While the region has many strengths that would support talent attraction and retention efforts, there are also barriers that must be acknowledged or mitigated for any initiatives to be successful, including:

* Lacking larger city amenities: retail, entertainment
* Cultural diversity
* Comparatively lower wages
* Difficulty engaging postsecondary students with the community
* Awareness of regional employment opportunities
* Fewer career advancement opportunities
* Social opportunities to meet friends or potential partners

Stakeholders identified many opportunities on which the region should focus its efforts related to talent. Some of the most commonly identified opportunities include:

* Continue to increase marketing efforts based on regional strengths.
* Target postsecondary institution students who have not yet decided where to pursue employment after graduation, presenting the region as a viable option.
* Create messaging around students’ priorities for their post-graduation plans: employment opportunities, cost of living, and affordable housing.
* Create connections with alumni networks to draw back graduates who have left the region.
* Facilitate connections between higher education institutions and businesses.
* Increase opportunities for young professionals to be engaged in the community and meet and interact with their peers.

The findings of this study will be utilized to guide the Talent Action Coalition’s next steps toward creating strategies and initiative to attract and retain regional talent. Based on facilitated discussions with the Coalition, it is recommended to begin with efforts to promote engagement and awareness among community partners, businesses, and regional students. Implementation may occur by sub-region, however, planning at the regional level will allow partner organizations to create synergies, realize efficiencies, and promote consistency of messaging where appropriate. Recommended strategies to research and consider include:

* **Young professionals networking and groups** to keep young professionals engaged with their peers after graduation.
* **Mentoring programs** to develop talent and provide individual opportunities for networking and growth.
* **Internship program and other work-based learning** to assist in creating a talent pipeline through hands-on learning and experience.
* **Affinity groups** to gather community members with like interests for engagement and relationship-building.
* **Sector-based organizations** to facilitate industry networking and promote career advancement opportunities.

As the Coalition identifies strategies and actions that are priorities moving forward, this information can be utilized to pursue further funding to support this work.

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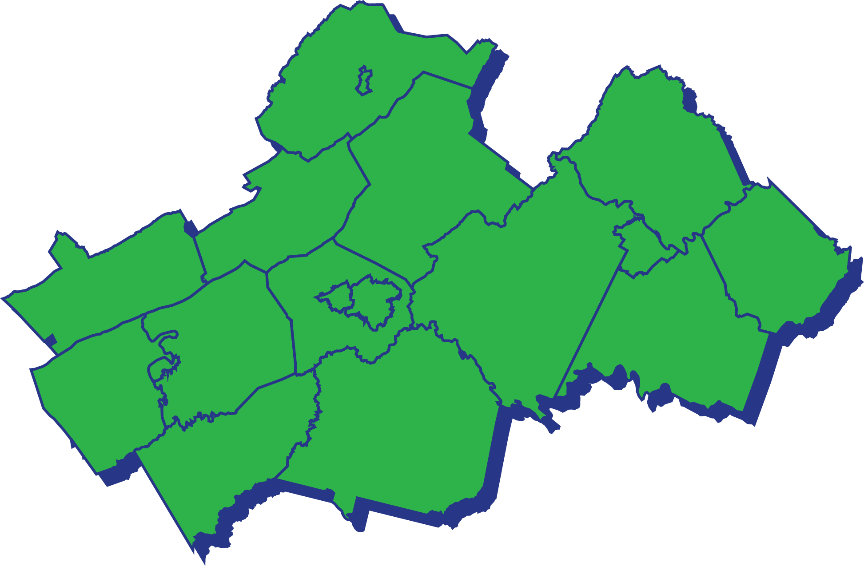
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# Introduction

The GO Virginia initiative is aimed at incentivizing collaboration among business, economic development, and workforce development to spur economic growth and diversification through the creation of high-wage jobs in nine designated regions across the Commonwealth.

GO Virginia Region 2 is supported by three local economic development organizations in three sub-regions, which include the following cities and counties:

* **Lynchburg Region | Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance**: Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg
* **New River Valley | Onward New River Valley**: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg
* **Roanoke Region | Roanoke Regional Partnership**: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Craig County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton.

Completed in August 2017, the GO Virginia Region 2 Growth and Diversification Plan identified **Talent Development, Attraction, and Retention** as one of the primary focus areas that the Region 2 Council should address moving forward. Region 2 is home to nearly 25 postsecondary institutions, of varying types, proving education and training to tens of thousands of students each year. This population of students presents an opportunity for Region 2 to cultivate a pipeline of talent from these institutions to regional businesses that are in need of skilled employees.

To develop strategies for tackling this issue, Region 2 created a Talent Action Coalition and commissioned this capacity study to understand the region’s strengths and challenges as they relate to attracting talent from local higher education institutions, retaining young professionals in the region, and otherwise meeting the needs of employers in recruiting young talent.

Thomas P. Miller and Associates was hired in July 2018 to conduct a ten-month study of talent attraction and retention in Region 2. The study included three main data gathering methods, as well as periodic reporting and feedback with the Talent Action Coalition and local economic development organizations.

First, six focus groups were held with higher education, in particular, career services and alumni relations, representatives and young professionals. Next one-on-one interviews were conducted with more than 50 business representatives across the region. And finally, based on the feedback gathered through focus groups and interviews, an online survey was created for regional postsecondary education students and alumni, garnering more than 1,100 responses.

The findings in this report represent a synthesized analysis of each of these activities, covering the talent needs identified across the region, the region’s strengths and challenges for promoting talent attraction and retention, and opportunities and recommendations for moving forward into action. The final sections of this report include appendices reporting the methodology and findings from the focus groups, interviews, and online survey in more detail.

# Talent in Region 2

As was identified by the Region 2 Council, talent is key to the growth and diversification of the economy. To effectively attract, retain, and develop the talent that is needed to support a thriving economy, the region must be a place that people want to both live and work.

Cultivating a strong talent pool in a region involves three elements:



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Talent Attraction**  drawing in talent from outside the region to fill necessary gaps in the local talent pool | **Talent Retention**  maintaining the current talent base and limiting the turnover of workers leaving the region for opportunity. | **Talent Development**  providing education and training opportunities to upskill existing talent in areas of demand by regional employers. |

As unemployment continues to hover at low rates, many areas around the country have been forced to explore expanding their talent pools through talent attraction. A region’s success in attracting talent from other locations requires a comprehensive strategy across a variety of community stakeholders that addresses both economic and lifestyle factors.

Any talent attraction effort is not truly successful unless it is coupled with a focus on talent retention. If skilled talent moves into to the region only to move within a few years, regional businesses are left with a cyclical problem of recruitment and turnover, increasing costs and reducing valuable experience and institutional knowledge.

Talent development is a critical piece of both talent attraction and retention. Local and regional availability of education and training is key to providing opportunities to students learn new skills needed in the economy, to employed workers to enhance skills for career advancement, and to workers needing or wanting to transition career pathways. These opportunities allow both individuals and businesses to be more flexible in their pursuit of skill development.

This study focuses on Region 2’s capacity to address talent attraction and retention, identifying strengths, challenges, and opportunities within the region. Talent development was addressed as a component of each of these elements.

## Talent Needs

A strong pipeline of talent is critical to the success and growth of regional employers. Like many communities around the country, the pool of available talent in Region 2 is dwindling due to low unemployment and a strong economy that is continuing to need more workers. While many employers reported receiving a significant amount of applications for open positions, most are struggling to find qualified applicants and seeing a mismatch in experience, specialized skills, or even foundational skills that are required.

Especially for low-skilled, entry-level positions, employers are not finding enough qualified applicants to fill positions. Because the pool is smaller, those who are available often lack essential employability skills needed to be successful in the workplace or experience other barriers to employment. While there are many students graduating from regional institutions that are seeking entry-level positions, many still do not possess necessary employability skills and for those that do, employers are often competing with positions in other cities with different amenities and sometimes higher pay.

While there may be more applicants for entry-level positions, larger gaps in talent are experienced among experienced and higher-skill level positions. Employer experience more difficulty finding professionals with 5-7 years of experience, including managers or team leaders. In speaking with young professionals in the region, many feel that the region doesn’t have as many opportunities for the “second job” after graduation, or the next step in a career path after an entry level position. For this reason, many leave the region to further their careers, which contributes to this gap in experience.

It was also found to be difficult to field candidates for high-skilled positions, such as physicians or executive-level roles. Unless someone is brought up through the company, many employers indicated that these recruitment efforts usually result in national searches that require “selling” the region and its attributes to attract talent.

Employers also indicate a gap in specialized skills that often come from experience. This is especially true among information technology and engineering talent needs. While regional institutions are producing graduates in these fields, often the skills employers need are much more specialized than those taught in the classroom and often are built through experience in the field. Employers are having to choose whether to conduct a wider search to find talent with both experience and these specialized skills, or to hire talent and train internally on the specialized skills needed.

Recruitment from outside of the region is typically necessary for high-skilled positions, or specialized skillsets, especially in information technology and engineering.

## bike mountain bike cycling woods forest trees nature trails bicycle mountain biking road bicycle tree soil trail path sports equipment cycle sport freeride vehicle woodland downhill mountain biking hybrid bicycle enduro bicycle frame wheel grass tire automotive tire cyclo cross bicycle plantStrengths

Stakeholders engaged throughout the study shared many strengths of the region that should be leveraged to attract and retain talent. Perhaps the biggest strength, and the one most commonly cited, was the physical environment and location of the region. The beauty of being among the mountains, rivers, and lakes was referenced frequently as one of the best aspects of the region, referenced as providing tranquility or serenity to residents. Stakeholders also noted the appeal of experiencing four seasons without many of the extremes found in other regions. The mix of rural and urban areas makes it easy to access quiet a quiet, relaxing environment that can be lacking in bigger cities.

Outdoor recreation activities were also one of the most commonly mentioned regional strengths. The prevalence of parks, hiking and biking trails, camping and fishing opportunities, historical attractions for exploring, and other outdoor activities are great attractors to the region. The physical location and its proximity to multiple large metro areas, highways, and air and rail travel were also cited as benefits to allowing for a mix of both small-metro advantages and access to larger areas. Washington, DC or Charlotte are not too far away to experience professional sports, attend larger events, or access a wider range of retail and entertainment amenities.

The quality of life and close-knit communities were most often cited as the best reasons to live in Region 2, regardless of sub-region. Stakeholders across interviews and focus groups in each sub-region indicated communities’ cost of living, safety, accessibility, and schools make the region a great place to live and for families to raise children. Several young professionals also identified that the accessibility of region’s smaller cities and communities make it easier to get involved in community activities and issues. Opportunities for civic engagement seemed to be much more accessible to new or young residents than they may be in bigger cities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Top Quality of Life Strengths Identified by Student Survey Respondents | | |
| **Lynchburg Sub-region** | **New River Valley Sub-region** | **Roanoke Sub-region** |
| Cost of Living  Affordable Housing  Outdoor Recreation  Education  Local Retail and Dining | Outdoor Recreation  Cost of Living  Affordable Housing  Safety  Education | Local Retail and Dining  Outdoor Recreation  Music and Nightlife  Employment Opportunities  High-Speed Internet |

The 25 postsecondary education and training institutions are a great strength of the region, both for residents and businesses. As the core purpose of these institutions, they offer quality education and training, providing a variety of options both to residents and those outside the region. Some institutions and/or individual programs have strong ties regional businesses and industries and provide a clear pathway for students to move directly into jobs, addressing the talent needs of employers. One example included an employer that partnered with local community colleges to hire students learning AutoCAD while they completed their programs. Upon graduation, the student would be hired full time and allowed to enroll in a Bachelor’s program with tuition reimbursement to become an engineer. This has helped to create an internal pipeline and career pathway for workers.

These institutions consistently recruit to the region, either through students or staff and faculty, and expose more people to what it is like to live in the area and the opportunities that exist. While cultural diversity was often mentioned as a challenge, much of the diversity in the region has stemmed through the people that have been attracted through higher education institutions. The institutions themselves also offer events, activities, and programming that promote cultural diversity and awareness. Higher education institutions also contribute significantly to the economic activity in the region, whether it is as some of the largest employers, or bringing in students and visitors who will contribute to the local economy. This economic activity allows communities to have more amenities and opportunities available to both residents and visitors alike.

One of the most important attributes uncovered about the communities in the region is the willingness for change and improvement, promoting forward progress. Many businesses as well as young professionals felt that efforts to improve communities and continue to make the region a better place to live and do business are a positive sign that it will continue to grow. Changes to city and town centers to bring in more retail, entertainment, and amenities have shown a move toward revitalization and interest in engaging citizens in their communities.

## Challenges

While the region has many attributes that make it an attractive place to live and work, there are also challenges that must be addressed within talent attraction and retention strategies. In fact, some groups of people, many of the attributes that some see as strengths would actually present as challenges, underlining the importance for a targeted approach to attracting and retaining not just any talent, but the right talent.

For some, the physical location of the region is a challenge, especially those looking for the amenities and resources of a large city. Entertainment, dining, retail, and cultural amenities are more limited than other more populous areas, and while transportation to larger areas is available, it is not as frequent, fast, or affordable as larger hubs. These challenges that are inherent to the region’s location show the importance of understanding and assessing the fit when recruiting talent.

**“The region could focus on efforts for diversity and inclusion…we just are not historically a diverse place.”**

As can be common with smaller cities and rural areas, one of the most commonly references attributes that is lacking in Region 2 is cultural diversity. This makes attracting diverse talent difficult, as many new residents are looking for a common in which to engage that shares their own culture, making it easier to feel at home. The lack of diversity can also promote a perception of a lack of tolerance, whether it is real or perceived.

One of the biggest challenges for regional businesses in recruiting talent is the comparatively lower wages in the region. This is especially true when recruiting talent that is not location-restricted and may be receiving offers from companies in other locations with higher relative wages. Though the cost of living in the region is lower, it does not always compensate for lower wages, especially within highly-skilled positions. There can be significant difficulty in communicating this comparison with other regions, especially with college students looking for their first jobs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Comparison Region | Median Earnings | Cost of Living Index |
| Region 2 | $49,456 | 99.4 |
| Richmond MSA | $61,842 | 103.7 |
| Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News MSA | $57,118 | 103.5 |
| Washington DC-Arlington-Alexandria MSA | $88,861 | 118.2 |
| Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington MSA | $72,652 | 116.5 |

The presence of many higher education institutions and their student populations is an advantage; however, it can be difficult to engage these students in the broader community outside of campus. Some institutions provide more opportunities for community connection than others, but the reality is that many students consider the campus culture more than the community in choosing their college. And likewise, campus is what institutions often are selling more in recruitment. Transportation to get students off campus and into the community can be a challenge, whether it is to experience community amenities, or to engage with local businesses.

Also, while there are significant education and training resources, they are not all training students in fields that are directly related to the needs of local businesses. This can make connections with area employers difficult and student awareness of local opportunities is a challenge. Among survey respondents, 45% of students indicated that they were not aware of career opportunities in their field locally, depicting this gap in awareness. The high volume of students in the region makes a targeted approach to engaging students more difficult, needing to understand how to navigate each institution and its programs and resources.

There is a perception, especially among young professionals, that there are fewer opportunities for career advancement within Region 2. Because of the smaller economy compared to big cities, there are fewer employers in many fields, leaving fewer openings for promotion and movement throughout an industry. Several comments indicated that in order for early career workers to grow, they would need to leave the region to access a better variety of opportunities. When one young professional was asked if he planned to stay in the region stated that he expected to move because to get promoted he would have to wait for another employee to retire, which may be 10-15 years away.

A smaller job market in Region 2 than bigger cities creates a perception that there are fewer career advancement opportunities for young professionals.

Many stakeholders also identified that it can be difficult to make social connections within the community if one isn’t originally from the area or has other ties. This includes several examples of young professionals who felt young people needed to leave the region to find a partner. Several young professionals who stayed in the region after graduating with a postsecondary degree expressed difficulty in transitioning to life post-graduation when they no longer had access to campus activities, such as intramural sports or clubs. They indicated that finding more ways to connect in ways like they did in college would be beneficial to feeling at home after graduation. Because relationships are one of the most significant reasons that people choose a community, be them friendships, family connections, or romantic relationships, this perception or lack of opportunity can be a barrier to recruiting young talent.

## Opportunities

Region 2’s access to such a large number of students and young professionals provides significant opportunity for talent attraction and retention to fill gaps in the region’s talent pool. A targeted strategy that leverages regional strengths and mitigates challenges offers the best chance at successfully cultivating talent that is the right fit for the region’s economy and lifestyle.

### Strengths-Based Marketing

Awareness of the opportunities and resources available in the region begins with a clear understanding of the region’s strengths and the target audience that would be a good fit for those strengths. While there are many students and young talent that would be a good fit for the region, not everyone is looking for the lifestyle or industry mix offered, so presenting a clear and true picture of the region is essential. Each sub-region is already doing work in this area and while there likely some customization for each sub-region, collaboration on a few common messages can help to show some consistency across the region. Sharing resources or materials where possible will help to create efficiencies.

### Targeting a Subset of Graduates

As has been mentioned, not all students who come to the region for education are realistic targets for staying in the region upon graduation. Graduates will primarily fall into three categories, those who know that they are leaving the region, those who plan to say, and those who don’t have any particular destination in mind after graduation. The greatest opportunity will be found in engaging those who don’t know where they want to go – this is the most “attractable” population by sharing the benefits and opportunities available upon staying in the region. Among students surveyed, this group represented about 25% of the more than 1,100 responses. This narrows the focus to a more manageable level from the goal of targeting all regional students.

### Message to Students’ Priorities

Messaging for attracting this population should reflect what students are most looking for in post-graduation life and employment. Student respondents to the survey answered that the most important factors in determining where to move after graduation were employment opportunities, cost of living, and affordable housing, indicating that these more practical factors are major determinants. Similarly, students said that compensation, location, and benefits packages were most important to their employment decisions.

### Focus on Alumni

Another key population for talent attraction is alumni of regional institutions. Many of those who participated in focus groups and interviews completed degrees (whether secondary or postsecondary) in the region, left to gain experience or education, and then returned to settle down and raise a family. Alumni who experienced the region during school are an ideal target because they already have a sense of the lifestyle and quality of life. Creating connections between businesses or industry groups and alumni offices at regional institutions could create opportunities to target this group and promote the option of returning to the region.

### Further Connections among Businesses and Higher Education Institutions

Increasing the connections among businesses and career development services representatives at each of the colleges is also an opportunity to further spread awareness of the employment opportunities available in the region. While most businesses referenced recruiting from institutions and those relationships as an asset, many also indicated that some of these connections are personal or on a smaller basis with individual faculty. Having a resource that provides the correct contacts at each institution would be helpful so businesses can avoid navigating each institution’s structure to find the right place to go.

### Increase Community Engagement Opportunities

Both attraction and retention strategies must have strong components of engaging talent with others in the community. Across all stakeholder engagement, it was clear that one of the strongest ties to the geographic area was through relationships, whether that was through family, a significant other, friends, employer connections, or strong community engagement. Strategies should create opportunities for these relationships to form. This might include the promotion of affinity groups, bringing people together based on common interests, facilitating mentorship programs among students or young professionals and experienced professionals in the community, or creating community-based internship or work-experience programs that allow students to engage in work while also being exposed to a variety of community organizations and activities.

# Recommendations

Based on the study findings and facilitated discussions among members of the Talent Action Coalition, the greatest impact on talent attraction and retention can be made through a concentrated effort on improving engagement and awareness within the region. The Coalition should concentrate these efforts on a few key targeted audiences. For talent attraction efforts, these include graduating college and university students as well as the alumni of secondary and postsecondary institutions that have left the region. The boomerang effect can be leveraged to attract talent that is familiar with the area and understand the benefits of the region. Retention efforts should be focused on existing young professionals and high-skilled talent in the region. Young professionals include workers in their 20s and 30s that represent a long-term talent solution, while maintaining the high-skilled talent that current exists in the region helps meet the current needs of business and provides some relief from national recruiting efforts.

Messaging is a vital component that must be considered when engaging the target audiences. Understanding the factors that are contributing to the talent’s decision on relocating or remaining in the region provides the framework for the what type of awareness strategies the Coalition should employ. As the evidence suggests, messaging around talent attraction should be centered around career opportunities, advancement opportunities, and affordability of the region, while talent retention should include quality of place and active community engagement.

Examples of programming or initiatives that the Coalition may support include the following:

* **Young professionals networking and groups** – Continue to promote and enhance. Provide greater opportunities for young talent to engage with each other to create meaningful relationships, network for career opportunities and advancement, peer mentoring, access to a diverse population, and develop of future leaders.
* **Mentoring programs** – Helps with talent development, provides direct access to examples of career success and advancement, establishes a broader network to improve retention.
* **Internship program and other work-based learning** – Assist in creating a pipeline of talent graduating from regional education institutions for specific skill needs (e.g., high-skilled talent), increase employability skills, and increase personal relationships.
* **Affinity groups** – Increases community engagement, provides talent with networking opportunities outside of work, leverages interests to support attraction and retention, and utilizes regional assets.
* **Sector-based organizations** – Provides support for all professionals with networking and awareness of career opportunities in a specific field to help retain skilled talent.

As its next steps, the Coalition should develop initiatives and tactics within these areas through a dedicated planning process or session, utilizing the recommendations and research as the foundational elements. Though some of this implementation may occur by sub-region, the Coalition should encourage collaboration help to realize synergies among areas. Regional focus and coordination will assist with leveraging resources and will result in the most impactful strategies in addressing talent attraction and retention. Outlining specific programs, initiatives, or actions and the steps it will take to implement will be beneficial in identifying funding sources and presenting a clear proposal for the next phase.

# Appendix A: Summary of Focus Group Findings

To best understand the current activities and factors that affect talent attraction and retention, Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) facilitated focus groups with regional higher education representatives involved in career services and alumni relations, as well as young professionals living and working in the region. Six focus groups were held during the week of October 1, 2018 and included one higher education and one young professional in each sub-region – the Lynchburg region, New River Valley, and the Roanoke region.

The focus group sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes and began with TPMA providing an overview about GO Virginia Region 2 and the purpose of the project so to provide context for the discussion. Questions asked of participants included:

**Higher Education**

1. What are students looking for upon graduation? In your experience, what portion are looking to stay in the region, or open to any geography?
2. What are the unique regional assets for attracting and retaining a quality workforce?
3. What are the greatest benefits to living in the Region 2 service area? What are the greatest challenges?
4. How are you currently marketing the region to students? To alumni?
5. Why do you find students stay in the region? Why do people come back to the region?
6. What are the common reasons for why students leave the region?
7. How are you engaging employers with your institutions and students?
8. What types of work-based learning and community engagement activities do you provide and/or support?
9. How are you working with local economic and workforce development organizations?
10. What would be the biggest changes in the region that could be implemented to retain and/or attract more graduates and workers?

**Young Professionals**

1. How did you end up in this area after graduation?
   1. If you grew up here, what made you stay?
   2. If you left and came back, what drew you back?
   3. If you grew up somewhere else, how did you decide to come to the region?
2. At this point in your life, how do you prioritize work, family, personal life, recreation, etc. in your decision on where to live?
3. What are the most attractive aspects of living in this region?
   1. If you were to try to recruit new residents your age, how would you “sell” the region?
4. What are the challenges with living here? Is there anything missing that you wish was available?
5. Are you engaged in the community outside of work? If so, how? If not, are there opportunities in which you would like to be engaged?
6. Do you see opportunities for career growth in this region? Why or why not?
7. In five years, do you see yourself still living here? Ten years? Why or why not?

Feedback gathered during these focus groups is summarized below by stakeholder type.

## Post-Secondary Education

Representatives from post-secondary education noted that many graduates typically leave the region upon graduation. Most participants indicated that a majority of their student body originated from within the region and an even larger majority of students stem from the Commonwealth of Virginia. Community college representatives stated that most of their students originated from their local communities and immediate neighboring areas, and this population tends to stay in the immediate area after graduation. Across all participants, graduates that tended to stay in the area are local, home-grown talent. They have family, friends, and a connection to the community, but it was noted that even those have begun to migrate to other geographic areas in search of employment opportunities.

Post-secondary education is aware of the assets they bring to the table when attracting students. Women’s colleges, for example, are competitive in the Commonwealth since only two exist with one offering an accredited engineering program. Some of the representatives from community colleges identified the competitive edge they have over four-year universities, including lower costs, smaller, personalized class-sizes, and easily transferable credits. As one community college representative noted, 3 out of 5 students continue their education to four-year universities in the region. Representatives from four-year universities identified their own set of strengths, including athletic programs, the arts, and on-campus entertainment options. Some of these universities also noted the opportunity for work-based learning (apprenticeships, internships, experiential learning) which opens the door for networking and career exploration following graduation. Alumni networks have been impactful in helping jobseekers find employment opportunities upon graduation, as noted by representatives from four-year universities.

The regional amenities have also been a resourceful recruitment tool for attracting students, especially those who are not from the region. Representatives from post-secondary education identified outdoor attractions such as the James River, Blue Ridge Parkway, Appalachian Trail, Blue Ridge Trail, and historical landmarks. These amenities promote a healthy, active lifestyle that can be appealing to younger students. Some post-secondary representatives have even tried to promote the downtown aspects of a college town by sending parents to the city’s downtown while students tour the campus. Other examples included downtown areas that underwent recent revitalization and as a result, have an increased presence of the arts, shopping, restaurants, and entertainment options. The strategy behind sending parents to these areas is to sell them not just on the college, but the community as a whole.

Representatives indicated that students perceived that the region offers a comfortable quality of life, however the wages are viewed as relatively low. As a result, participants speculated graduates search for employment opportunities where the pay scale is higher, even if it means a greater cost of living. Community college and some university representatives stated that students who are local recognize that while earnings are low for the area, some can at least return home to save on housing expenses. The most common cities referenced by participants where graduates have moved included Washington, D.C., Charlotte, Richmond, and Atlanta. Although housing costs in neighboring metropolitan areas are higher than within the region, graduates accept the trade-off if it means moving to a city that better aligns with their interests. For some students, the region lacks amenities most attractive to them. As representatives from post-secondary education noted earlier, the region is known for having a number of quality outdoor assets, including hiking, biking, camping, fishing, etc., but for those who do not have an interest in outdoor activities, their options seem more limited.

Several representatives from post-secondary education have engaged employers to offer work-based learning opportunities. Internships and apprenticeships were the most commonly identified work-based learning activities, but representatives expressed a desire to expand the availability of those types of opportunities. Colleges that offer online programs noted that work-based learning opportunities for those programs are limited with one four-year university trying to push forward with a solution. Representatives have cited their relationship with employers has included leveraging their expertise to help design and validate program curriculum, but it has been difficult for students to connect to employers. A common strategy cited by representatives of four-year universities was to leverage college alumni to act as mentors and resources for professional networking. Several community colleges expressed very minimal engagement with alumni due to limited inability to contact them.

## Young Professionals

The young professionals that participated in the focus groups represented: local talent that attended post-secondary education in the region; talent that migrated from outside the region to attend post-secondary education and received employment opportunities following graduation; and those who had moved away but returned, typically because of family connections.

Participants noted the quality of life became the driving element for staying in the region upon graduation. Several participants expressed a preference for a smaller city/rural community where they can grow and raise a family. For several young professional representatives, the close-knit community offers a supportive group of neighbors, quality K-12 education, community-based organizations, and a number of family-friendly activities in the natural landscape.

Some of the challenges identified by young professional representatives are due to the size of the community. Because it is smaller than neighboring cities, some representatives cited the limited access to transportation as a major challenge to the area. For these individuals, transportation impacts the availability of jobs as well. For example, if they prefer the quiet lifestyle the region has to offer but have to work in a nearby city, the long commute can be tiresome and stressful, especially if they have a family in the region. Representatives noted that these individuals rationalize their long commute because the earnings outside of the region are more competitive and higher than those within the region. The size of the region has impacted the career development of young professionals in both positive and negative ways. As young professional representatives noted, the smaller job market means quicker access to learning opportunities and growth into mid-level positions when they are available. However, the small job market provides limited fewer of these opportunities for upward mobility.

Participants explained that those who have since moved back to the region after gaining experience elsewhere have done so due to their career and/or family obligations. Some of the positive changes to the region that representatives have heard from these individuals include downtown revitalization projects, which have opened the door to craft breweries and wineries, bikeways, restaurants, and shopping, and interest-sharing groups such as cycling teams, running teams, off-road cyclist clubs, and volunteering organizations.

Representatives noted that the region offers limited opportunity for young professionals to find companionship, which is even more frustrating for those that are transplanted to the region by their employer. As they cited, there are not enough young, single individuals in the region to find companionship with compared to larger, nearby cities. Some young professional representatives pointed out that they were able to meet their spouse outside the region after graduation. They then moved back to the region whether for their career, family obligations, or preference for the region’s quality of life.

# Appendix B: Summary of Interview Findings

To best understand the recruitment, hiring, and retention practices of employers, one on one interviews were conducted with business representatives from various industry sectors in Go Virginia Region 2’s three sub-regions: Lynchburg, New River Valley, and Roanoke. Between October 15 and November 12, 2018, interviews were performed, either via phone or in-person, with more than 50 business representatives, each lasting approximately 30-60 minutes. The industries represented by interview participants within each of the sub-regions include:

* Lynchburg: Architecture/Construction, Energy Production, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Warehousing
* New River Valley: Agriculture, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Technology
* Roanoke: Accounting/Finance, Architecture/Construction, Automotive, Beverage Production, Education, Healthcare, Insurance, Legal, Manufacturing

Interview participants were asked a series of questions to identify common or shared hiring practices amongst employers. Questions include:

**Talent:**

1. How many employees do you have in this region?
2. What are your company’s greatest talent needs?
   1. Position types?
   2. Skillsets?

**Recruitment:**

1. How are you currently recruiting talent?
   1. Locally/Regionally?
   2. Nationally?
2. Do you have a preference for local/regional hiring? How would you define local/regional?
3. Are you working on any strategies to bring in talent from outside the region?
4. What strategies are you pursuing for talent retention?
   1. If you have problems with retention, are people leaving for local competitors or to other areas?
5. What makes this area a good place to live?
6. What makes this area a good place to do business?
7. Are you involved in any direct recruitment at regional colleges and universities?
   1. How successful have those efforts been?
   2. What could be done to strengthen those efforts?
8. Are you partnering with colleges and universities in other ways, such as work-based learning programs?
9. Have you participated in any effort to target alumni of regional colleges and universities?
   1. If so, in what capacity?

**Planning:**

1. What are the three most important things the region could do to help with talent attraction and retention?
2. Is there anything else you wish to share?

## Findings

Discussions with employers revealed that throughout the region, employers share similar talent needs and are often times competing for the same talent. Interviewees indicated that entry-level, low-skilled workers are in abundance across the region and are more inclined to jump from employer to employer (and sometimes across industry) than skilled workers for a slight wage increase, in some cases, seeking employment elsewhere only after they received industry training. The majority of interviewees across all industries expressed that high skilled positions which required 5 or more years of experience are in short supply and represent the greatest demand for talent attraction.

Interviewees most commonly identified utilizing online job boards (e.g., Zip Recruiter, Indeed, etc.) for recruitment efforts. For entry-level positions, employers indicated a preference to focus hiring efforts on local talent by promoting openings through job boars, social media, temp agencies, and word-of-mouth. For technical, skilled, and experienced positions, employers stated they used a combination of higher education relationships and recruiting companies. Recruitment outside the region if often difficult due to comparably lower salaries than their counterparts located in larger urban centers. Employers indicated that though the cost of living is lower in the region compared to bigger cities, often the higher salary is still enticing and hard to compete with.

Some employers indicated that they oftentimes find talent that once lived in the region and moved away, only to move back after being away for a few years. Interviewees indicated this boomerang effect is likely due to family ties, engagement with regional higher education, and the quality of life in the region, including outdoor amenities, cost of living, close knit atmosphere, and amenities.

## Lynchburg

### Talent

Among interviewees, the largest employers were from the energy sector, with between 1,500-2,500 employees. Interviewees from other industries ranged in employment size of 250-500. The demand for talent across industry sectors ranges from entry-level talent to upper level management. For manufacturers, skilled workers, such as welders and plant supervisors were the most difficult to recruit. Multiple manufacturers added that engineers were even more difficult to recruit. This was further echoed among the construction and energy production industry interviewees, who cited engineers as a top need. Construction and manufacturing alike have struggled with recruiting technicians and electricians. Some industries have experienced ease with filling upper-level, professional positions. As one employer from warehousing/logistics noted, management positions have been easier to fill (and retain) than entry-level warehouse workers. The healthcare industry, which employs a large number of workers in the Lynchburg sub-region, is in need of a range of medical staff from medical assistants to nurses to physicians. Locally, these positions are difficult to recruit, especially the more skilled the position.

### Recruitment

Most interviewees indicated a preference for local talent, however, cited that in order to fill job vacancies, they are forced to expand their search beyond the sub-region. The most common recruitment tools referenced were online job boards (e.g., Zip Recruiter, Monster, and Indeed), social media, and temp agencies, with the latter two targeting local talent more than others.

The manufacturing industry interviewees had the most variety in recruitment strategies and resources in use such as local partnerships with workforce development agencies, community colleges, and universities. Several manufacturers worked directly community colleges to design customized training programs and provide a pipeline of talent for their individual needs. Additionally, work-based learning opportunities were mentioned by representatives from manufacturing, construction, and healthcare as a key recruiting tool, including internship opportunities for university seniors to provide hands-on learning experience and exposure to area companies. Employers, particularly those with healthcare and engineering opportunities, identified a number of colleges and universities with which they have had successful partnerships. For example, the healthcare industry has tapped into Central Virginia Community College to recruit medical assistants and manufacturers and construction companies have tapped into Virginia Technical Institute, Virginia Tech, and Liberty University to engage their engineering programs for talent.

Recruitment through word-of-mouth was also a common method throughout the manufacturing industry with one manufacturer offering employee referrals as a strategy. Aside from construction, manufacturing was the only industry who noted word-of-mouth as an effective recruitment strategy during the interviews. Both industries have tried to leverage industry associations to fill upper-level positions but in doing so, result in recruiting nationally versus locally. Employers from the healthcare industry have embraced staff referral programs to find medical assistants and nurses but in order to recruit physicians and higher-level staff, they have had to contract with recruiting companies to conduct a national talent search.

Talent retention in the Lynchburg sub-region has not been a large concern for many employers interviewed. Aside from a handful of issues which occurred mostly in entry-level positions, interviewees indicated that most talent has left the region due to family circumstances or a change in career for a spouse. Few have adopted specific workforce retention strategies since it has not been a pressing concern, however, interviewees in the healthcare industry, which often recruit nationally for higher-skilled positions, have taken considerable approaches to talent attraction and retention. For example, the hiring staff will showcase the region to the applicant and their family and try to sell them on all the region has to offer. Upon the candidate accepting the position, the employer still attempts to make the families feel at home by introducing them to other transplant families and hosting “meal meetings” to check in and offer support in any way they can. This has been hugely successful and as made retention of high-level positions more successful.

All of the interviews indicated that the greatest tool for talent attraction and retention was the area itself. The Lynchburg sub-region offers a number of amenities that makes it a good place to live, including the family/work-life balance. As employers from all industries noted, the region has a number of outdoor amenities that offer family activities including hiking trails, bike paths, fishing, camping, and green space. One participant identified the downtown theatre in Lynchburg as a valuable source for entertainment. Interviewees, particularly those from the engineering and healthcare industries, indicated they have access to talent locally due to the high number of higher educational institutions available in the sub-region. In addition, the local K-12 education system was regarded positively. Some employers identified the business-friendly environment as an attractive element of the sub-region, including banking institutions, insurance agencies, and local government. The most common feedback for describing the region was a city with “a small-town feel” that is “family-friendly.” Interviewees noted the low cost of living as a characteristic that they often emphasize to talent when recruiting. However, as one employer stated, a low cost of living environment equates to lower pay scales compared to larger cities, which is one of the consistent challenges mentioned during the interviews. Diversity of the sub-region was also identified across industries as concern for talent attraction and retention.

### Planning

Employers recognized the need for future planning in order to address the talent gaps they are experiencing throughout their industry. Some suggested focusing talent recruitment efforts on those who may originally be from the region and moved away or those from local higher educational institutions who left after graduation. These individuals would be likely to understand the quality of life of the region as they have experienced it, making them the ideal recruits. Employers from manufacturing and healthcare noted that the region has to be conscious of the low pay scale. If employers are serious about attracting and retaining new talent, the earnings must be competitive, otherwise employees will move to larger urban centers where compensation is higher. Healthcare has been proactive in recognizing the need for diversity and inclusion by incorporating check-ins with transplant families, but other participants indicated that they have no current strategies. Employers recognize the pipeline of local talent and how it stems from the K-12 system. Employers from all industries have voiced support for investing in the K-12 system and becoming active partners.

## New River Valley

### Talent

Interviews with employers from the New River Valley (NRV) sub-region crossed over four industry sectors agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, and technology, with employment sizes ranging from 10 to 3,000. The talent needs within each sector vary, identifying commonalities as well as unique challenges. The majority of technology companies interviewed identified a demand for software engineers and developers. Ideally, these are mid-level positions constituting 8-10 years of experience. However, they indicated they were able to fill entry level positions adequately to meet their demands. Participants from the healthcare industry expressed a demand for talent ranging from low skill to highly technical skilled positions. One employer noted that the food and nutrition department in their facility is constantly in demand, often competing with local retail for talent. Manufacturing interviews stated that entry-level workers were available, but the retention rates of these workers are low as they move from company to company for relatively low pay increases. The demand for engineers was noted to be high, and that there was not a sufficient supply to meet demand, especially among specialized fields and those with experience.

### Recruitment

Participant preference for hiring local talent was often dependent on the size of the company. Larger companies interviewed had a tendency to recruit talent from wherever they could find it, often because there were more resources or a centralized recruiting function in place to do so, whereas smaller to medium sized companies placed an emphasis on exhausting recruitment efforts locally first before expanding their search. Some of the most commonly-used recruitment tools for entry-level positions include online job boards (e.g., Zip Recruiter, Indeed, etc.) and social media. Representatives from healthcare and manufacturing offered bonuses for employee referrals. One healthcare company cited local newspapers as the “last resort” for recruiting entry-level staff. Several manufacturers interviewed in the NRV sub-region have leveraged the assistance of the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) to help recruit mid-level talent regionally and statewide. Multiple employers noted that when openings require experienced and higher-level skills, third-party recruiting firms are often retained to extend the search nationally. Several of the interviewees noted partnerships with regional higher education institutions, having attended college job fairs and/or presented in front of classes, and posting openings on the college’s online job board. Some have also partnered with higher education to offer internship opportunities, job shadowing, clinicals, and other work-based learning opportunities.

Interview participants often described the local area as an asset when it comes to recruiting talent. Examples included: the large number colleges and universities; low cost of living, outdoor amenities (e.g., hiking trails, fishing, biking, etc.) and scenic landscape; safe community; access to quality healthcare; availability of rail and air transportation; and high-quality K-12 education. Interviewees expressed that for young couples looking to grow a family, the sub-region is an ideal place to live.

Talent retention has been an issue with many of the employers interviewed in the sub-region, but efforts have been underway to address the situation. Across each industry sector representatives described improving company culture by offering company transparency, holiday events, employee recognition, and employer feedback opportunities to increase retention. Part of these strategies was improving life outside of work. Examples include increased wages, employer contributions to employee benefits and retirement, and tuition reimbursement.

### Planning

In order to increase talent attraction and retention in the area, interviewees suggested that the NRV sub-region needs to be inclusive of talent not originally from the area. One example mentioned was a young professional networking groups where individuals can meet each other, share interests, and together, integrate into the community. Another example included the development of a relocation packet, inclusive of information such as housing, community resources, community events, local education, shopping and entertainment activities, etc., as well as assistance for trailing spouses.

## Roanoke

### Talent

Employers interviewed throughout the Roanoke sub-region had various employment sizes with the largest concentrated within healthcare (6,000+) and manufacturing (1,500). Smaller-sized companies (less than 50) were most often professional service industries, such as banking, insurance, and legal. A mix of entry-level and skilled positions were in most demand by employers interviewed. Healthcare representatives stated entry-level in-demand positions included medical assistants, clinical staff, and non-healthcare positions such as food service and hospitality. The skilled positions including registered nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists were typically sought after locally. The talent needs of manufacturers interviewed focused primarily low-skill assembly positions and technical-skilled positions (e.g., welders and machinists). Manufacturers and construction companies alike expressed a significant demand for engineers, specifically electrical engineers, regardless of their industry experience. As two manufacturers noted, if an engineer is graduating from one of the local universities, every employer in the industry is out there to retain them. A number of professional service industries such as banking, insurance, and legal were most in demand of talent to fill entry-level positions that required short term certifications. For example, the need for CDL drivers was expressed by employers across industries. Employers noted that these positions will always be in-demand but for the local economy.

### Recruitment

Larger companies, such as manufacturing, healthcare, and construction who recruit entry-level, low-skill talent indicated that they leverage online job boards (e.g., Indeed, Monster, and Zip Recruiter) and word of mouth for recruitment efforts. These positions are typically recruited locally versus outside the sub-region. For positions that require more skills, employers noted that they are often recruiting outside the sub-region. Some employers interviewed represented large, global companies which rely on recruiting companies. One of those global employers explained how the company will relocate young talent to the Roanoke location for two years with the hope that they gain experience and become attracted to the region. Smaller companies from the service industry have placed a greater preference for recruiting local, homegrown talent, due in part to the fact that the positions most in demand are entry-level and do not require formal training or experience. Finding experienced, skilled workers has been a challenge for nearly all companies interviewed and to remedy that challenge, employers have begun leveraging their relationships with local colleges and universities.

Interviewees noted that the colleges and universities across the region have been valuable resources for recruiting talent, including Radford University, Virginia Tech, Hollins University, Virginia Western Community College, New River Community College, Liberty University, Dabney Lancaster Community College, Roanoke College, and Randolph College. Nearly half of all the employers who were interviewed have a staff member directly responsible for recruitment efforts but a smaller percentage of those actually have a strong relationship with the colleges. An assortment of employers from manufacturing and construction have presented in higher education classrooms but very few offered work-based learning programs. One employer from construction noted that his company has offered internships in the past, but they only take on one intern per summer.

Employers interviewed indicated that the skilled talent they need are migrating to places like Northern Virginia, Washington D.C., and Charlotte due to the appeal of larger cities’ entertainment, activities, transportation, and networking. Due to this, employers noted that one of the selling points to prospective talent is the low-cost of living in the City of Roanoke and surrounding areas. A commonality amongst employers interviewed was their description of Roanoke as a small metro that is easily accessible and has all the amenities and attractions that a larger city has to offer, which is useful in recruiting. However, they argued that these amenities are not marketed widely enough to capture the interest and attention of all residents in the region.

Employers indicated that talent retention is strong in the region, especially in smaller-sized companies of less than twenty employees. Employers attributed this trend to company pay and benefits and the opportunity for career advancement. It was also noted that talent that leave one company often go to a competitor within the same industry. Some employers from manufacturing and healthcare noted that the talent retention is more difficult with entry-level positions, and often after receiving training, workers leverage their new skills for higher pay elsewhere. In addition, some employers noted that young talent recruited from outside the region also leave Roanoke for the larger city to find companionship as they suggested that there are very few opportunities for meeting single adults across the region.

### Planning

When asked what could be done in the region to promote talent attraction and retention, a common idea was to create a unified marketing campaign, branding the region. Employers across industries were receptive to this idea and proposed highlighting the region’s greatest assets, ranging from the outdoor amenities to the training and educational opportunities at higher educational institutions. The community colleges were noted by employers from manufacturing, construction, healthcare, and production as excellent resources for upskilling talent in the region. As some employers pointed out, the demand for skilled talent is so high and the sub-region should be promoting shorter-term educational and training opportunities readily available at the community colleges to high school juniors and seniors.

Several interviewees also referenced that entertainment and leisure activities for those who do not prefer outdoor activities may seem limited. Increasing the opportunities available and advertising those that exist can promote the area to additional groups beyond those who love the outdoors. Finally, employers indicated interest in continuing their relationships with regional organizations to contribute to planning for the future, recognizing the need to work together.

# Appendix C: Summary of Survey Methodology and Findings

## Methodology

### Survey Design

Following initial project discussions, the TPMA Team began to design a student survey. Regular update calls were leveraged to discuss survey priorities to help home in on survey question topics. Once questions were developed, a Word document containing draft questions was sent to project leadership for review and further refinement. The survey draft was also sent to the participating institutions for review and determination of the need of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. For those that required IRB approval, the TPMA Team developed a survey overview document that highlighted the purpose of the survey, outlined survey questions, discussed protection and security of the data collected, and talked about how the results from the survey would be used.

To facilitate appropriate response rates, questions were designed to be concise and leveraged skip logic and branching to ensure respondents would only complete relevant questions. In the design phase, it was estimated that the survey would take an average of 5-10 minutes to complete. The Team’s design approach prioritized collaboration and ongoing feedback loops with project leadership and institution contact persons to ensure that questions were targeted to the study’s priorities and were appropriate for the survey audience (e.g., reading level, language, and terminology).

The survey included a series of questions for alumni and those currently enrolled (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students). For both current students and alumni, the survey gathered demographics including original place/region of residence, institution that is/was attended, fields of study at those institutions, class status, and anticipated/received award. For students currently enrolled, respondents were asked factors that were important to them when considering a place to live and work after graduation, awareness of career opportunities, indicators that they believe ere strengths and lacking in the region, and types of interactions with employers to date. For juniors, seniors, and graduate students, respondents were asked the resources utilized to conduct their employment search in addition to the questions listed above. For respondents that indicated their status as alumni, they were redirected to a different series of questions that requested current job status, where they currently live, ranked reasons why they chose or chose not to stay in the region, and indicators that were strengths and lacking in each region. A list of specific questions, including skip logic maps, is provided In Appendix D.

#### Target Population

The survey sought to gather perceptions from college students, including freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, graduate students, and alumni from the following educational institutions:

* American National University
* Central Virginia Community College
* Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
* Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
* Ferrum College
* Hollins University
* Jefferson College of Health Sciences
* Liberty University
* New River Community College
* Radford University
* Randolph College
* Roanoke College
* Sweet Briar College
* University of Lynchburg
* Virginia Tech
* Virginia University of Lynchburg
* Virginia Western Community College

### Survey Administration

Once the survey was finalized, the Team put the survey into SurveyMonkey for administration. The Team relied on each institution to administer the survey through the appropriate channels/departments (e.g., career services and alumni department). TPMA leveraged their data management and security policy to ensure appropriate measures were in place for transmitting, storing, and destroying data.

The survey opened on Thursday, January 31, 2019 and closed on Friday, February 22, 2019. Throughout the administration period, the Team periodically checked the survey responses for significant missingness that could indicate error (e.g., non-response).

### Survey Analysis

Once the survey was closed, the data was exported from SurveyMonkey into Excel for analysis. Data was disaggregated, cleaned, and prepped for analysis. The following analysis methods were used:[[1]](#footnote-2)

* **Frequencies** were calculated for all responses, determining the number of times a data value occurred. While the simplest form of analysis, frequencies are useful in providing an overview of the distribution and responses for each question.
* **Cross-tabulations** analyze the relationship between two variables – a type of analysis heavily used in survey research as it can highlight relationships that may not be apparent when only examining aggregate frequencies. For this analysis, cross-tabulations were used to identify differences in responses by institution.

### Limitations

The following limitations are recognized in this study:

Selection Bias – To protect respondent information, the Team relied on each institution for survey administration. Through this, however, the approach introduced selection bias into the findings. Students and alumni more interested in providing feedback may have chosen to respond to the survey at a higher rate than less interested or less engaged students. In addition, the Team had no control over who the survey was sent to, which increases the possibility of selection bias.

Lack of Generalizability – Without a rigorous sampling method led by the TPMA Team, the findings cannot be generalized to the greater student/alumni population. As noted above, the survey was administered by each institution meaning that the Team did not have control over the individuals and groups to which the survey was sent. While findings are presented for those students/alumni in which data was collected, findings cannot be generalized to the greater student/alumni population for each region and institution. However, the purpose of the survey was to gather perceptions from students/alumni in the region, so generalizability is not necessarily pertinent to the findings.

Unknown Response Rates – Similar to above, it is unknown how many students/alumni the survey was sent to at each institution. Because of that, it is impossible to calculate a response rate to better understand the number of individuals that completed the survey compared to the number to which the survey was sent, which, again, impacts the study’s ability to generalize the findings.

## Findings

A total of **1,173** students and alumni opened and completed at least some of the survey. These respondents represented a total of 13 institutions of higher education in the Go Virginia Region 2 (Region 2), including Lynchburg, New River Valley, and Roanoke sub-regions. Respondents mainly represented Virginia Tech, and most respondents were from Virginia but outside of Region 2. The majority of respondents were also seniors that were, overall, looking to leave the state upon graduation. The respondents that classified themselves as alumni, overall, represented the Lynchburg region and chose to stay for a spouse/partner/significant other. For those alumni that left the region, most reported employment opportunities as the main reason for leaving.

For those that completed the survey, it was found that there were no significant differences in how respondents answered questions by college or by major, due mainly to the variance in majors across institutions that made it difficult to make valid comparisons. However, there were differences in how respondents viewed the sub-regions, which appeared to be heavily influenced by their residence in that region. For instance, those that were originally from a specific sub-region tended to view that sub-region more favorably as well as more negatively than other sub-regions. This could be due to several factors including a lack of awareness of other sub-regions (which was confirmed by the number of ‘I don’t know’ responses in various questions about other sub-regions) as well as a level of familiarity with the sub-region in which they resided, allowing respondents to have stronger opinions. Generally, respondents indicated factors such as civic engagement opportunities, education, and affordable housing as strengths across the regions but tended to report indicators such as diversity, music and nightlife, and local retail and dining as lacking.

Respondents tended to report similar factors as important when considering where to live after graduation, which included cost of living and employment opportunities. However, variances by sub-region were found in those that were looking to leave versus stay in the region. Those originally from the Lynchburg and Roanoke regions tended to report that they will be looking for employment in the region after graduation. Respondents from the New River Valley region, however, tended to report most frequently that they would be looking to leave the region upon graduation.

When considering the company to work for after graduation, respondents tended to report that compensation and benefits package were the most important factors. Overall, respondents noted that they were aware of career opportunities in the region as well as opportunities for career advancement. While this did differ by institution in that some institutions had lower instances of reporting this awareness, overall the findings were consistent.

The findings below are broken down by region and institution as well as outlined at the aggregate-level. Institution-level snapshots are also provided at the end of this section.

### Aggregate

The findings in this section highlight overall findings from the survey. A total of **1,173** students and alumni opened and completed at least some of the survey.

#### Demographics

The following findings represent questions that were asked of all respondents. Of the 1,169 individuals that indicated where they were from originally, the most frequent response was within Virginia, but outside of Region 2 (372, 32%). A total of 174 (15%) respondents indicated they were from the Lynchburg region; 139 (12%) indicated they were from the Roanoke region; and 125 (11%) reported they were from the New River Valley region originally.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Region | Frequency |
| Lynchburg | 174 (15%) |
| New River Valley | 125 (11%) |
| Roanoke | 139 (12%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above areas | 372 (32%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 299 (25%) |
| Outside of the United States | 60 (5%) |
| TOTAL | **1,169** |

All 1,173 respondents reported the college or university they currently attend or most recently attended. The most responses came from the following institutions: Virginia Tech (376, 32%), Liberty University (152, 13%), and Hollins University (150, 13%). The complete breakdown of respondents by institution is provided below:

| Institution | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Central Virginia Community College | 5 (0.43%) |
| Hollins University | 150 (13%) |
| Jefferson College of Health Sciences | 1 (0.09%) |
| Liberty University | 152 (13%) |
| New River Community College | 1 (0.09%) |
| Radford University | 147 (12%) |
| Randolph College | 82 (7%) |
| Roanoke College | 81 (7%) |
| Sweet Briar College | 41 (4%) |
| University of Lynchburg | 94 (8%) |
| Virginia Tech | 376 (32%) |
| Virginia University of Lynchburg | 1 (0.09%) |
| Virginia Western Community College | 19 (2%) |
| None of the above[[2]](#footnote-3) | 23 (2%) |
| TOTAL | **1,173** |

There were no respondents from the following institutions: American National University, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Ferrum College.

Of the 1,119 respondents asked to select the award(s) in which they anticipated or received upon graduation, 1,017 (91%) indicated receiving or anticipating a bachelor’s degree. The least frequent response was a professional degree (2, 0.18%). A total of 50 (22%) of respondents indicated more than one option below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Award Type | Frequency |
| Certificate | 67 (6%) |
| Diploma | 144 (13%) |
| Associate Degree | 42 (4%) |
| Bachelor’s Degree | 1,017 (91%) |
| Master’s Degree | 74 (7%) |
| Doctorate Degree | 7 (1%) |
| Professional Degree | 2 (0.18%) |
| Undecided | 16 (1%) |
| TOTAL | **1,119** |

Most respondents completing the survey that answered the question (1,122 total) classified themselves as seniors (583, 52%), while the least represented category was those that indicated ‘Not Applicable’ (15, 1%).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Class Status | Frequency |
| Freshman | 101 (9%) |
| Sophomore | 87 (8%) |
| Junior | 233 (21%) |
| Senior | 583 (52%) |
| Graduate Student | 44 (4%) |
| Alumnus | 59 (5%) |
| Not Applicable | 15 (1%) |
| TOTAL | **1,122** |

#### Living and Working

The following findings represent questions that were asked of only those currently enrolled at an institution. Alumni were directed to a different set of questions highlighted in the Alumni section of this Appendix.

When asked about the top three indicators that are most important to respondents when considering where to live after graduation, employment opportunities (735, 73%) was the most frequent response followed by cost of living (642, 64%) and affordable housing (299, 30%). The breakdown of aggregate responses by most frequently selected to least frequently selected is provided below:

| Indicator | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Employment opportunities | 735 (73%) |
| Cost of living | 642 (64%) |
| Affordable housing | 299 (30%) |
| Safety | 293 (29%) |
| Outdoor recreation | 161 (16%) |
| Commute time | 158 (16%) |
| Music and nightlife | 139 (14%) |
| Cultural diversity | 117 (12%) |
| Education | 111 (11%) |
| Local retail and dining | 102 (10%) |
| High-speed internet | 79 (8%) |
| Healthcare | 63 (6%) |
| Public transit | 54 (5%) |
| Dating opportunities | 36 (4%) |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 32 (3%) |
| TOTAL | **1,007** |

When considering factors that are important to deciding what company to work for after graduation, 1,001 respondents provided ranked responses. The factor that was ranked as most important was compensation (272, 28%), while the factor that was ranked as least important was company reputation (239, 24%). The factors, including their most frequent ranking, the frequency of that ranking, and the total number of respondents that ranked that factor, are provided in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Factor | Most Frequent Ranking | Frequency of Ranking | Total Respondents |
| Compensation | 1 | 272 (28%) | 962 |
| Location | 1 | 149 (15%) | 971 |
| Benefits Package | 2 | 184 (19%) | 965 |
| Career Advancement Opportunities | 4  8 | 125 (13%) | 977 |
| Culture/Environment | 5 | 138 (14%) | 974 |
| Work-Life Balance | 5 | 125 (13%) | 968 |
| Educational Opportunities/  Professional Development | 7 | 136 (14%) | 978 |
| Company Mission | 9 | 157 (16%) | 969 |
| Company Stability | 9 | 153 (16%) | 984 |
| Company Reputation | 10 | 239 (24%) | 995 |

With these factors in mind, 1,005 respondents indicated their plans for where they will be primarily looking for employment following graduation. Of these respondents, most indicated outside of Virginia (308, 31%) or that they did not know (258, 26%). For the Go Virginia regions, 69 (7%) of respondents stated they would look for employment in the Roanoke region, while 64 (6%) indicated the Lynchburg region and 50 (5%) indicated the New River Valley region.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location | Frequency |
| Lynchburg region | 64 (6%) |
| New River Valley region | 50 (5%) |
| Roanoke region | 69 (7%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 224 (22%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 308 (31%) |
| Outside of the United States | 32 (3%) |
| I don’t know | 258 (26%) |
| TOTAL | **1,005** |

When asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 199 | 183 | 266 |
| Cost of living | 363 | 404 | 320 |
| Cultural diversity | 179 | 141 | 261 |
| Affordable housing | 353 | 365 | 284 |
| High-speed internet | 251 | 209 | 324 |
| Local retail and dining | 259 | 198 | 414 |
| Music and nightlife | 147 | 148 | 356 |
| Outdoor recreation | 348 | 434 | 390 |
| Public transit | 168 | 248 | 240 |
| Healthcare | 188 | 167 | 274 |
| Education | 292 | 325 | 290 |
| Safety | 258 | 331 | 234 |
| Dating opportunities | 178 | 168 | 237 |
| Employment opportunities | 225 | 193 | 349 |
| Commute time | 245 | 232 | 265 |
| I don’t know | **334** | **318** | **278** |

One quality of life indicator appeared in the top five cited as strengths for each sub-region: outdoor recreation. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included cost of living, affordable housing, outdoor recreation, education, and local retail and dining. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included outdoor recreation, cost of living, affordable housing, safety, and education. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included local retail and dining, outdoor recreation, music and nightlife, employment opportunities, and high-speed internet.

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 125 | 132 | 91 |
| Cost of living | 81 | 76 | 106 |
| Cultural diversity | 233 | 238 | 171 |
| Affordable housing | 90 | 80 | 105 |
| High-speed internet | 139 | 164 | 87 |
| Local retail and dining | 162 | 188 | 73 |
| Music and nightlife | 262 | 237 | 125 |
| Outdoor recreation | 91 | 55 | 69 |
| Public transit | 183 | 151 | 148 |
| Healthcare | 141 | 147 | 74 |
| Education | 114 | 106 | 81 |
| Safety | 133 | 85 | 140 |
| Dating opportunities | 185 | 181 | 136 |
| Employment opportunities | 179 | 197 | 116 |
| Commute time | 106 | 98 | 88 |
| I don’t know | **392** | **382** | **350** |

Three quality of life indicators appeared in the top five cited as lacking for each sub-region: cultural diversity, music and nightlife, and dating opportunities. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included music and nightlife, cultural diversity, dating opportunities, public transit, and employment opportunities. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included cultural diversity, music and nightlife, employment opportunities, local retail and dining, and dating opportunities. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included cultural diversity, public transit, safety, dating opportunities, and music and nightlife.

#### Career Search

Of the 995 that answered the question, 547 (55%) stated they were aware of career opportunities in their field in the region, while 448 (45%) stated they were not aware. When asked if the region offers opportunities for career advancement in their field, 998 respondents indicated most frequently that they did believe the region offered these opportunities (613, 61%).

Juniors, seniors, and graduate students were asked about the resources utilized to conduct their employment search. Most respondents indicated using online job search (672, 83%) as their resource. Private employment agencies (35, 4%) were reported least frequently as resources used for employment searching.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource | Frequency |
| Alumni networking | 285 (35%) |
| Campus Career Center | 371 (46%) |
| Career fairs and other campus events | 397 (49%) |
| Local Career Center | 44 (5%) |
| Online job search | 672 (83%) |
| Private employment agency | 35 (4%) |
| Social media | 265 (33%) |
| Other | 79 (10%) |
| TOTAL | **995** |

Responses in the ‘Other’ category included resources such as: word of mouth, direct communication with organizations/companies, personal networking, previous internships and employment, professors, and job search resources provided by institution.

When thinking about the types of interactions respondents have had with regional employers, the most frequent type of interaction was through campus events (494, 54%, out of 916 responses). The least frequent type of interaction was reported as apprenticeships (19, 2%).

| Type of Interaction | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Apprenticeships | 19 (2%) |
| Internships | 286 (31%) |
| Job shadowing | 124 (14%) |
| Mentorship | 105 (11%) |
| One-on-one meetings | 122 (13%) |
| Interviews | 314 (34%) |
| Volunteering opportunities | 364 (40%) |
| Campus events | 494 (54%) |
| I have not had any interaction with employers | 224 (24%) |
| TOTAL | **916** |

#### Alumni

The following findings represent questions that were asked only of alumni.

Of the 56 alumni that indicated their job status, most respondents noted they were employed in a position related to their area of study (34, 61%). No respondents indicated they were pursuing further education (0, 0%).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Job Status | Frequency |
| I am employed in a position related to my area of study | 34 (61%) |
| I am employed in a position unrelated to my area of study | 16 (29%) |
| I am pursuing further education | 0 (0%) |
| I am unemployed and seeking employment | 3 (5%) |
| I am unemployed and not seeking employment | 3 (5%) |
| TOTAL | **56** |

Most alumni respondents indicated living in the Lynchburg region (28, 49%), with 10 (17%) respondents indicating residence in the Roanoke region and 6 (11%) indicated New River Valley region residence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Place of Residence | Frequency |
| Lynchburg region | 28 (49%) |
| New River Valley region | 6 (11%) |
| Roanoke region | 10 (17%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 6 (11%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 7 (12%) |
| Outside of the United States | 0 (0%) |
| TOTAL | **57** |

For those alumni that indicated residence in Region 2, most noted the most important reason for staying in the region is a spouse/partner/significant other (14, 33%). These reasons are listed below, including their most common ranking on a scale of one (most important) to six (least important):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reason | Most Frequent Ranking | Frequency of Ranking | Total Respondents |
| Spouse/Partner/Significant Other | 1 | 14 (33%) | **43** |
| Quality of Life | 1 | 13 (30%) | **43** |
| Affordability | 2 | 14 (33%) | **43** |
| Employment Opportunities | 2 | 10 (23%) | **43** |
| Local Amenities | 5 | 18 (42%) | **43** |
| Proximity to Family | 6 | 14 (33%) | **43** |

For those alumni that indicated residence outside of Region 2, most noted the most important reason for leaving the region was employment opportunities (6, 55%). These reasons are listed below, including their most common ranking on a scale of one (most important) to six (least important):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reason | Most Frequent Ranking | Frequency of Ranking | Total Respondents |
| Employment Opportunities | 1 | 6 (55%) | 11 |
| Affordability | 2  3  5 | 3 (25%) | 12 |
| Quality of Life | 3 | 4 (36%) | 11 |
| Proximity to Family | 3 | 3 (30%) | 10 |
| Local Amenities | 5 | 4 (36%) | 11 |
| Spouse/Partner/Significant Other | 6 | 7 (58%) | 12 |

When asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, alumni indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 16 | 7 | 16 |
| Cost of living | 32 | 10 | 15 |
| Cultural diversity | 8 | 8 | 15 |
| Affordable housing | 30 | 11 | 14 |
| High-speed internet | 20 | 9 | 14 |
| Local retail and dining | 24 | 10 | 22 |
| Music and nightlife | 11 | 5 | 19 |
| Outdoor recreation | 31 | 21 | 21 |
| Public transit | 13 | 12 | 12 |
| Healthcare | 12 | 9 | 13 |
| Education | 32 | 15 | 15 |
| Safety | 26 | 14 | 13 |
| Dating opportunities | 9 | 8 | 16 |
| Employment opportunities | 13 | 9 | 20 |
| Commute time | 29 | 12 | 15 |
| I don’t know | **5** | **11** | **10** |

One quality of life indicator appeared in the top five cited as strengths for each sub-region: outdoor recreation. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included cost of living, education, outdoor recreation, affordable housing, and commute time. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included outdoor recreation, education, safety, public transit, and commute time. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included local retail and dining, outdoor recreation, employment opportunities, music and nightlife, and dating opportunities.

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 8 | 4 | 3 |
| Cost of living | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Cultural diversity | 17 | 11 | 5 |
| Affordable housing | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| High-speed internet | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| Local retail and dining | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| Music and nightlife | 21 | 7 | 1 |
| Outdoor recreation | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| Public transit | 15 | 6 | 5 |
| Healthcare | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| Education | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Safety | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Dating opportunities | 16 | 7 | 2 |
| Employment opportunities | 14 | 9 | 2 |
| Commute time | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| I don’t know | **11** | **15** | **15** |

One quality of life indicator appeared in the top five cited as lacking for each sub-region: cultural diversity. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included music and nightlife, cultural diversity, dating opportunities, public transit, and employment opportunities. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included cultural diversity, employment opportunities, high-speed internet, music and nightlife, and dating opportunities. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included cultural diversity, affordable housing, public transit, safety, and civic engagement opportunities.

### Regional

#### Aggregate Go Virginia Region2

For those respondents that indicated being originally from the Lynchburg, New River Valley, and Roanoke regions (438), most represented Virginia Tech (96, 22%); Radford University (80, 18%); and Hollins University (52, 12%). Region 2 respondents reflected aggregate findings in that most reported their class status as seniors (185, 45%) that were receiving or already received a bachelor’s degree (361, 84%).

##### Currently Enrolled Students

Respondents also echoed aggregate findings in that the top three indicators that were most important when considering where to live after graduation were employment opportunities (258, 72%), cost of living (243, 68%), and affordable housing (115, 32%). However, most respondents indicated looking outside of Virginia (92, 26%), or that they do not yet know (92, 26%), for employment opportunities upon graduation despite being from one of the sub-regions.

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 42 (12%) |
| New River Valley region | 27 (7%) |
| Roanoke region | 47 (13%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 51 (14%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 92 (26%) |
| Outside of the United States | 6 (2%) |
| I don’t know | 92 (26%) |
| TOTAL | **357** |

When asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 87 | 65 | 101 |
| Cost of living | 131 | 141 | 116 |
| Cultural diversity | 77 | 55 | 116 |
| Affordable housing | 125 | 125 | 103 |
| High-speed internet | 104 | 84 | 140 |
| Local retail and dining | 107 | 75 | 163 |
| Music and nightlife | 63 | 62 | 149 |
| Outdoor recreation | 131 | 158 | 148 |
| Public transit | 59 | 86 | 96 |
| Healthcare | 81 | 75 | 122 |
| Education | 107 | 116 | 117 |
| Safety | 108 | 125 | 82 |
| Dating opportunities | 69 | 67 | 100 |
| Employment opportunities | 99 | 75 | 140 |
| Commute time | 96 | 87 | 108 |
| I don’t know | **117** | **111** | **84** |

One quality of life indicator appeared in the top five cited as strengths for each sub-region: outdoor recreation. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included cost of living, outdoor recreation, affordable housing, safety, local retail and dining, and education. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included outdoor recreation, cost of living, affordable housing, safety, and education. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included local retail and dining, music and nightlife, outdoor recreation, high-speed internet, and employment opportunities.

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 43 | 59 | 34 |
| Cost of living | 37 | 27 | 43 |
| Cultural diversity | 74 | 80 | 44 |
| Affordable housing | 40 | 30 | 39 |
| High-speed internet | 48 | 63 | 31 |
| Local retail and dining | 51 | 74 | 23 |
| Music and nightlife | 88 | 78 | 39 |
| Outdoor recreation | 29 | 18 | 27 |
| Public transit | 74 | 61 | 55 |
| Healthcare | 50 | 46 | 23 |
| Education | 45 | 38 | 28 |
| Safety | 45 | 33 | 54 |
| Dating opportunities | 64 | 63 | 47 |
| Employment opportunities | 58 | 79 | 43 |
| Commute time | 39 | 39 | 31 |
| I don’t know | **132** | **133** | **108** |

Three quality of life indicators appeared in the top five cited as lacking for each sub-region: cultural diversity, dating opportunities, and employment opportunities. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included music and nightlife, cultural diversity, public transit, dating opportunities, and employment opportunities. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included cultural diversity, employment opportunities, music and nightlife, local retail and dining, high-speed internet, and dating opportunities. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included public transit, safety, dating opportunities, cultural diversity, cost of living, and employment opportunities.

##### Alumni

Of those originally from Region 2, respondents echoed aggregate findings in that most reported they were employed in a position related to their area of study (18, 60%). These respondents also tended to stay in one of the sub-regions and reported currently living in the Lynchburg region (16, 52%) most frequently; compared to the New River Valley region (5, 16%) and Roanoke region (8, 26%). Only two respondents indicated residence outside of the regions (within Virginia but outside of the regions: 1, 3%; outside of Virginia: 1, 3%).

For those that stayed in the region, respondents indicated quality of life and spouse/partner/significant other as the most important reason for staying.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reason | Most Frequent Ranking | Frequency of Ranking | Total Respondents |
| Quality of Life | 1 | 9 (32%) | 28 |
| Spouse/Partner/Significant Other | 1 | 9 (32%) | 28 |
| Affordability | 3 | 9 (32%) | 28 |
| Employment Opportunities | 4  6 | 8 (29%) | 28 |
| Local Amenities | 5 | 12 (43%) | 28 |
| Proximity to Family | 6 | 9 (32%) | 28 |

For the two respondents that left the region despite being originally from the region, employment opportunities (1, 50%) and local amenities (1, 50%) were indicated as most important to their reason for leaving. Both respondents listed affordability as the second most important reason for leaving.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reason | Most Frequent Rankings |
| Employment Opportunities | 1, 4 |
| Local Amenities | 1, 5 |
| Affordability | 2 |
| Quality of Life | 3 |
| Proximity to Family | 4, 5 |
| Spouse/Partner/Significant Other | 6 |

When asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, alumni indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 9 | 6 | 11 |
| Cost of living | 15 | 7 | 12 |
| Cultural diversity | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| Affordable housing | 13 | 8 | 10 |
| High-speed internet | 10 | 7 | 11 |
| Local retail and dining | 12 | 9 | 16 |
| Music and nightlife | 5 | 5 | 14 |
| Outdoor recreation | 16 | 13 | 15 |
| Public transit | 7 | 10 | 9 |
| Healthcare | 5 | 7 | 9 |
| Education | 17 | 11 | 10 |
| Safety | 14 | 11 | 7 |
| Dating opportunities | 5 | 7 | 10 |
| Employment opportunities | 8 | 7 | 13 |
| Commute time | 17 | 9 | 12 |
| I don’t know | **3** | **4** | **2** |

For alumni that answered the above questions, and were originally from Region 2, two quality of life indicators appeared in the top five cited as strengths for each sub-region: outdoor recreation and commute time. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included education, commute time, outdoor recreation, cost of living, and safety. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included outdoor recreation, education, safety, public transit, commute time, and local retail and dining. Finally, the top five cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included local retail and dining, outdoor recreation, music and nightlife, employment opportunities, cost of living, cultural diversity, and commute time.

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the highest percentage for each category highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of living | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Cultural diversity | 8 | 7 | 3 |
| Affordable housing | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| High-speed internet | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Local retail and dining | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Music and nightlife | 9 | 5 | 1 |
| Outdoor recreation | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Public transit | 8 | 4 | 3 |
| Healthcare | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Education | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Safety | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Dating opportunities | 8 | 5 | 2 |
| Employment opportunities | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| Commute time | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| I don’t know | **5** | **7** | **7** |

For alumni that answered the above questions, and were originally from Region 2, two quality of life indicators appeared in the top five cited as strengths for each sub-region: cultural diversity and public transit. The top five cited indicators for the Lynchburg Region included music and nightlife, cultural diversity, public transit, and dating opportunities. The top five cited indicators for the New River Valley included cultural diversity, employment opportunities, music and nightlife, dating opportunities, high-speed internet, and public transit. Finally, the top four cited indicators for the Roanoke Region included affordable housing, safety, cultural diversity, and public transit.

#### Sub-Regional Breakdown

The following breakdown is provided for those that stated they were originally from one of the three sub-regions.

##### Lynchburg Region

A total of 174 respondents indicated original residence in the Lynchburg region and attended the following institutions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Institution | Frequency |
| Central Virginia Community College | 4 (2%) |
| Liberty University | 42 (24%) |
| Radford University | 8 (5%) |
| Randolph College | 39 (22%) |
| Roanoke College | 3 (2%) |
| Sweet Briar College | 11 (6%) |
| University of Lynchburg | 50 (29%) |
| Virginia Tech | 14 (8%) |
| Virginia University of Lynchburg | 1 (0.6%) |
| None of the above[[3]](#footnote-4) | 2 (1%) |
| TOTAL | **174** |

The majority of respondents indicated their class status as seniors (65, 40%) with 16 (10%) indicating they were alumni.

| Class Status | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Freshman | 13 (8%) |
| Sophomore | 15 (9%) |
| Junior | 46 (28%) |
| Senior | 65 (40%) |
| Graduate Student | 2 (1%) |
| Alumni | 16 (10%) |
| Not applicable | 5 (3%) |
| TOTAL | **162** |

###### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the most important indicators when considering where to live after graduation, respondents originally from the Lynchburg region stated that cost of living (95, 71%) was most important, followed by employment opportunities (94, 71%) and safety (49, 37%). When considering employment, respondents were asked to rank factors that were most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation. Respondents originally from the Lynchburg region indicated compensation (43, 33%) as the most important factor followed by benefits package (29, 22%) and work-life balance (21, 16%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate where they would be looking for employment post-graduation. The majority of respondents indicated looking for employment in the Lynchburg region (40, 30%), followed by ‘I don’t know’ (35, 26%) and outside of Virginia (32, 24%). Respondents also noted an awareness of career opportunities in the region (87, 66%) and believed the region offers opportunities for career advancement (89, 67%).

When asked what quality of life indicators were strengths for each region, respondents tended to rate the Lynchburg region favorably, and most commonly answered “I don’t know” for the New River Valley region. The five indicators for each sub-region most chosen as strengths by those from the Lynchburg region are highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 61 | 12 | 26 |
| Cost of living | 99 | 30 | 21 |
| Cultural diversity | 48 | 13 | 34 |
| Affordable housing | 85 | 25 | 20 |
| High-speed internet | 63 | 23 | 45 |
| Local retail and dining | 74 | 21 | 46 |
| Music and nightlife | 35 | 18 | 49 |
| Outdoor recreation | 87 | 47 | 38 |
| Public transit | 44 | 18 | 29 |
| Healthcare | 50 | 17 | 31 |
| Education | 74 | 23 | 26 |
| Safety | 69 | 23 | 18 |
| Dating opportunities | 45 | 18 | 30 |
| Employment opportunities | 66 | 20 | 44 |
| Commute time | 79 | 15 | 26 |
| I don’t know | **25** | **53** | **39** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 14 | 21 | 7 |
| Cost of living | 17 | 11 | 11 |
| Cultural diversity | 39 | 25 | 9 |
| Affordable housing | 16 | 12 | 11 |
| High-speed internet | 31 | 18 | 6 |
| Local retail and dining | 28 | 21 | 6 |
| Music and nightlife | 58 | 21 | 10 |
| Outdoor recreation | 11 | 11 | 7 |
| Public transit | 42 | 21 | 10 |
| Healthcare | 29 | 13 | 4 |
| Education | 21 | 17 | 6 |
| Safety | 21 | 14 | 10 |
| Dating opportunities | 36 | 19 | 9 |
| Employment opportunities | 27 | 23 | 11 |
| Commute time | 13 | 15 | 7 |
| I don’t know | **29** | **61** | **53** |

###### Alumni

For alumni originally from the Lynchburg region, most reported they were currently employed in a position related to their field (9, 56%), with five (31%) indicating they were employed in a position unrelated to their field. All alumni respondents originally from the Lynchburg region reported they were currently living in the Lynchburg region (16, 100%). A spouse/partner/significant other (5, 31%) was the number one reason why respondents chose to stay in the Lynchburg region, followed by affordability (5, 31%), quality of life (6, 38%), employment opportunities (7, 44%), local amenities (9, 56%), and proximity to family (6, 38%).

For those originally from the Lynchburg region, when asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the five most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Cost of living | 12 | 0 | 2 |
| Cultural diversity | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Affordable housing | 11 | 1 | 3 |
| High-speed internet | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| Local retail and dining | 10 | 2 | 5 |
| Music and nightlife | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Outdoor recreation | 11 | 3 | 5 |
| Public transit | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| Healthcare | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Education | 11 | 1 | 2 |
| Safety | 11 | 2 | 3 |
| Dating opportunities | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Employment opportunities | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| Commute time | 14 | 0 | 1 |
| I don’t know | **1** | **4** | **2** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Cost of living | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Cultural diversity | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Affordable housing | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| High-speed internet | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Local retail and dining | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| Music and nightlife | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Outdoor recreation | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Public transit | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Healthcare | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Education | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Safety | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Dating opportunities | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Employment opportunities | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| Commute time | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| I don’t know | **1** | **4** | **3** |

##### New River Valley Region

A total of 125 respondents indicated original residence in the New River Valley region and attended the following institutions:

| Institution | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Hollins University | 5 (4%) |
| New River Community College | 1 (0.8%) |
| Radford University | 50 (40%) |
| Randolph College | 1 (0.8%) |
| Roanoke College | 3 (2.4%) |
| Virginia Tech | 65 (52%) |
| TOTAL | **125** |

The majority of respondents indicated their class status as seniors (76, 64%) with 8 (7%) indicating they were alumni.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Class Status | Frequency |
| Freshman | 1 (0.8%) |
| Sophomore | 7 (6%) |
| Junior | 20 (17%) |
| Senior | 76 (64%) |
| Graduate Student | 6 (5%) |
| Alumni | 8 (7%) |
| Not applicable | 1 (0.8%) |
| TOTAL | **119** |

###### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the most important indicators when considering where to live after graduation, respondents originally from the New River Valley region stated that employment opportunities (78, 72%) were most important, followed by cost of living (65, 60%) and affordable housing (38, 35%). When considering employment, respondents were asked to rank factors that were most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation. Respondents originally from the New River Valley region indicated compensation (32, 31%) as the most important factor followed by benefits package (19, 18%) and culture/environment (18, 17%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate where they would be looking for employment post-graduation. The majority of respondents indicated looking for employment outside of Virginia (35, 32%) followed by ‘I don’t know’ (26, 24%) and the New River Valley region (22, 20%). Respondents also noted an awareness of career opportunities in the region (65, 61%) and believed the region offers opportunities for career advancement (68, 64%).

When asked what quality of life indicators were strengths for each region, respondents tended to rate the New River Valley and Roanoke regions favorably, while most commonly answering “I don’t know” for the Lynchburg region. The five indicators most chosen as strengths for each sub-region are highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 12 | 36 | 36 |
| Cost of living | 18 | 84 | 26 |
| Cultural diversity | 19 | 30 | 43 |
| Affordable housing | 20 | 74 | 25 |
| High-speed internet | 23 | 45 | 46 |
| Local retail and dining | 21 | 36 | 57 |
| Music and nightlife | 14 | 30 | 52 |
| Outdoor recreation | 22 | 78 | 38 |
| Public transit | 11 | 54 | 34 |
| Healthcare | 19 | 41 | 38 |
| Education | 19 | 68 | 31 |
| Safety | 20 | 73 | 17 |
| Dating opportunities | 16 | 38 | 39 |
| Employment opportunities | 21 | 36 | 45 |
| Commute time | 10 | 57 | 26 |
| I don’t know | **39** | **11** | **20** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 19 | 25 | 9 |
| Cost of living | 9 | 11 | 18 |
| Cultural diversity | 19 | 37 | 10 |
| Affordable housing | 12 | 10 | 16 |
| High-speed internet | 8 | 28 | 5 |
| Local retail and dining | 11 | 36 | 2 |
| Music and nightlife | 14 | 40 | 3 |
| Outdoor recreation | 9 | 4 | 14 |
| Public transit | 14 | 22 | 10 |
| Healthcare | 12 | 23 | 7 |
| Education | 13 | 14 | 9 |
| Safety | 14 | 12 | 23 |
| Dating opportunities | 13 | 23 | 4 |
| Employment opportunities | 15 | 37 | 6 |
| Commute time | 13 | 16 | 12 |
| I don’t know | **44** | **21** | **30** |

###### Alumni

For alumni originally from the New River Valley region, most reported they were currently employed in a position related to their field (4, 67%). Alumni respondents originally from the New River Valley region reported currently living in the New River Valley region (4, 57%) most frequently, with one respondent each (14%) residing in the Roanoke region, within Virginia but outside of the regions, and outside of Virginia. A spouse/partner/significant other (2, 40%) and quality of life (2, 40%) were the number one reasons why respondents chose to stay in the New River Valley region, followed by proximity to family (2, 40%) and local amenities (3, 60%). For those that left the region, the main reasons were employment opportunities (1, 50%) and local amenities (1, 50%), followed by affordability (2, 100%), and quality of life (2, 100%).

For those originally from the New River Valley region, when asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Cost of living | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| Cultural diversity | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Affordable housing | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| High-speed internet | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Local retail and dining | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| Music and nightlife | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Outdoor recreation | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| Public transit | 0 | 5 | 2 |
| Healthcare | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Education | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| Safety | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| Dating opportunities | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Employment opportunities | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Commute time | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| I don’t know | **1** | **0** | **0** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of living | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Cultural diversity | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Affordable housing | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| High-speed internet | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Local retail and dining | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Music and nightlife | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Outdoor recreation | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Public transit | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Healthcare | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Education | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Safety | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Dating opportunities | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Employment opportunities | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Commute time | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| I don’t know | **2** | **2** | **2** |

##### Roanoke Region

A total of 139 respondents indicated original residence in the Roanoke region and attended the following institutions:

| Institution | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Hollins University | 47 (34%) |
| Jefferson College of Health Sciences | 1 (0.7%) |
| Liberty University | 2 (1%) |
| Radford University | 22 (16%) |
| Roanoke College | 24 (17%) |
| University of Lynchburg | 4 (3%) |
| Virginia Tech | 17 (12%) |
| Virginia Western Community College | 16 (12%) |
| None of the above[[4]](#footnote-5) | 6 (4%) |
| TOTAL | **139** |

The majority of respondents indicated their class status as seniors (44, 34%) with 8 (6%) indicating they were alumni.

| Class Status | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Freshman | 20 (15%) |
| Sophomore | 11 (8%) |
| Junior | 36 (27%) |
| Senior | 44 (34%) |
| Graduate Student | 8 (6%) |
| Alumni | 8 (6%) |
| Not applicable | 4 (3%) |
| TOTAL | **131** |

###### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the most important indicators when considering where to live after graduation, respondents originally from the Roanoke region stated that employment opportunities (86, 74%) was most important, followed by cost of living (83, 72%) and affordable housing (35, 30%). When considering employment, respondents were asked to rank factors that were most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation. Respondents originally from the Roanoke region indicated compensation (31, 3328 as the most important factor followed by benefits package (23, 22%) and career advancement opportunities (22, 20%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate where they would be looking for employment post-graduation. The majority of respondents reported looking for employment in the Roanoke region (39, 34%), followed by ‘I don’t know’ (31, 27%) and outside of Virginia (25, 22%). Respondents also noted an awareness of career opportunities in the region (62, 53%) and believed the region offers opportunities for career advancement (74, 64%).

When asked what quality of life indicators were strengths for each region, respondents tended to rate the Roanoke region favorably. The most chosen indicators for each sub-region are highlighted below in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 14 | 17 | 39 |
| Cost of living | 14 | 27 | 69 |
| Cultural diversity | 10 | 12 | 39 |
| Affordable housing | 20 | 26 | 58 |
| High-speed internet | 18 | 16 | 49 |
| Local retail and dining | 12 | 18 | 60 |
| Music and nightlife | 13 | 14 | 48 |
| Outdoor recreation | 22 | 33 | 72 |
| Public transit | 4 | 14 | 33 |
| Healthcare | 12 | 17 | 53 |
| Education | 14 | 25 | 60 |
| Safety | 19 | 29 | 47 |
| Dating opportunities | 8 | 11 | 31 |
| Employment opportunities | 12 | 19 | 51 |
| Commute time | 7 | 15 | 56 |
| I don’t know | **53** | **47** | **25** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 10 | 13 | 18 |
| Cost of living | 11 | 5 | 14 |
| Cultural diversity | 16 | 18 | 25 |
| Affordable housing | 12 | 8 | 12 |
| High-speed internet | 9 | 17 | 20 |
| Local retail and dining | 12 | 17 | 15 |
| Music and nightlife | 16 | 17 | 26 |
| Outdoor recreation | 9 | 3 | 6 |
| Public transit | 18 | 18 | 35 |
| Healthcare | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Education | 11 | 7 | 13 |
| Safety | 10 | 7 | 21 |
| Dating opportunities | 15 | 21 | 34 |
| Employment opportunities | 16 | 19 | 26 |
| Commute time | 13 | 8 | 12 |
| I don’t know | **59** | **51** | **25** |

###### Alumni

For alumni originally from the Roanoke region, most reported they were currently employed in a position related to their field (5, 63%), with 2 (25%) indicating they were employed in a position unrelated to their field. Nearly all alumni respondents originally from the Roanoke region reported they were currently living in the Roanoke region (7, 88%), with the other respondent living in the New River Valley region (1, 13%). Quality of life (3, 43%) was the number one reason why respondents chose to stay in the Roanoke region, followed by employment opportunities (2, 29%), local amenities (2, 29%), and a spouse/partner/significant other (2, 29%).

For those originally from the Roanoke region, when asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted below in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Cost of living | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Cultural diversity | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Affordable housing | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| High-speed internet | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Local retail and dining | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Music and nightlife | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Outdoor recreation | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Public transit | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Healthcare | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Education | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Safety | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Dating opportunities | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Employment opportunities | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Commute time | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| I don’t know | **1** | **0** | **0** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Cost of living | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Cultural diversity | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Affordable housing | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| High-speed internet | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Local retail and dining | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Music and nightlife | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Outdoor recreation | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Public transit | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Healthcare | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Education | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Safety | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Dating opportunities | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Employment opportunities | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Commute time | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| I don’t know | **2** | **1** | **2** |

##### Outside Region 2

A total of 731 respondents indicated original residence outside of Region 2 (including within Virginia but outside of Region 2, outside of Virginia, and outside of the United States) and attended the following institutions:

| Institution | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Central Virginia Community College | 1 (0.14%) |
| Hollins University | 96 (13%) |
| Liberty University | 108 (15%) |
| Radford University | 66 (9%) |
| Randolph College | 42 (6%) |
| Roanoke College | 51 (7%) |
| Sweet Briar College | 30 (4%) |
| University of Lynchburg | 40 (5%) |
| Virginia Tech | 279 (38%) |
| Virginia Western Community College | 3 (0.41%) |
| None of the above[[5]](#footnote-6) | 15 (2%) |
| TOTAL | **731** |

The majority of respondents indicated their class status as seniors (397, 56%) with 27 (4%) indicating they were alumni.

| Class Status | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Freshman | 67 (9%) |
| Sophomore | 53 (8%) |
| Junior | 130 (18%) |
| Senior | 397 (56%) |
| Graduate Student | 28 (4%) |
| Alumni | 27 (4%) |
| Not applicable | 4 (0.60%) |
| TOTAL | **706** |

###### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the most important indicators when considering where to live after graduation, respondents originally from outside of Region 2 stated that employment opportunities (475, 73%) was most important, followed by cost of living (399, 62%) and affordable housing (182, 28%). When considering employment, respondents were asked to rank factors that were most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation. Respondents originally from outside of the Region 2 indicated compensation (164, 27%) as the most important factor followed by benefits package (112, 18%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate where they would be looking for employment post-graduation. The majority of respondents reported looking for employment outside of the state (213, 33%), followed by within Virginia but outside of Region 2 (173, 27%). Within Region 2, respondents indicated that they would most likely live in the New River Valley region (23, 4%), followed by the Lynchburg and Roanoke regions (22, 3%). Respondents also noted an awareness of career opportunities in the region (333, 52%) and believed the region offers opportunities for career advancement (382, 60%).

When asked what quality of life indicators were strengths for each region, respondents tended to rate the Roanoke region favorably. Respondents from outside of Region 2 identified two common indicators in the top five for each sub-region, including cost of living and outdoor recreation. The most chosen indicators for each sub-region are highlighted below in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 112 | 118 | 164 |
| Cost of living | 232 | 262 | 204 |
| Cultural diversity | 101 | 86 | 145 |
| Affordable housing | 228 | 239 | 181 |
| High-speed internet | 147 | 124 | 184 |
| Local retail and dining | 151 | 123 | 251 |
| Music and nightlife | 84 | 86 | 207 |
| Outdoor recreation | 216 | 276 | 242 |
| Public transit | 108 | 162 | 144 |
| Healthcare | 106 | 92 | 152 |
| Education | 184 | 209 | 173 |
| Safety | 149 | 206 | 152 |
| Dating opportunities | 108 | 101 | 137 |
| Employment opportunities | 125 | 118 | 209 |
| Commute time | 148 | 145 | 157 |
| I don’t know | **216** | **207** | **194** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 82 | 73 | 56 |
| Cost of living | 44 | 49 | 62 |
| Cultural diversity | 159 | 158 | 126 |
| Affordable housing | 50 | 50 | 65 |
| High-speed internet | 91 | 101 | 55 |
| Local retail and dining | 111 | 114 | 49 |
| Music and nightlife | 174 | 159 | 85 |
| Outdoor recreation | 62 | 37 | 41 |
| Public transit | 109 | 90 | 92 |
| Healthcare | 91 | 101 | 50 |
| Education | 69 | 68 | 52 |
| Safety | 88 | 52 | 85 |
| Dating opportunities | 121 | 118 | 88 |
| Employment opportunities | 121 | 117 | 73 |
| Commute time | 67 | 59 | 56 |
| I don’t know | **260** | **248** | **242** |

Respondents from outside of Region 2 identified two common indicators in the top five for each sub-region, including cultural diversity and dating opportunities.

###### Alumni

For alumni originally from outside of Region 2, most reported they were currently employed in a position related to their field (16, 62%), with 8 (31%) indicating they were employed in a position unrelated to their field and one (4%) respondent each indicating they were unemployed and seeking employment and unemployed and not seeking employment. Most alumni respondents originally from outside of Region 2 reported they were currently living in the Lynchburg region (12, 46%), with the other respondent living in the New River Valley region (1, 4%) and two respondents indicating residence in the Roanoke region (2, 8%). A spouse/significant other/partner (5, 33%) was the number one reason respondents indicating staying in the region, followed by affordability (8, 53%). For those that left the region, the number one reason for leaving was employment opportunities (5, 56%).

For those originally from outside of Region 2, when asked about the quality of life indicators that were strengths in each region, respondents indicated the following, with the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in green:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| Cost of living | 17 | 3 | 3 |
| Cultural diversity | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Affordable housing | 17 | 3 | 4 |
| High-speed internet | 10 | 2 | 3 |
| Local retail and dining | 12 | 1 | 6 |
| Music and nightlife | 6 | 0 | 5 |
| Outdoor recreation | 15 | 8 | 6 |
| Public transit | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Healthcare | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| Education | 15 | 4 | 5 |
| Safety | 12 | 3 | 6 |
| Dating opportunities | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| Employment opportunities | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Commute time | 12 | 3 | 3 |
| I don’t know | **2** | **7** | **8** |

When thinking about those indicators that are lacking in each region, respondents indicated the following, the most chosen indicators for each sub-region highlighted in red:

| Indicator | Lynchburg region | New River Valley region | Roanoke region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic engagement opportunities | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Cost of living | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Cultural diversity | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| Affordable housing | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| High-speed internet | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Local retail and dining | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Music and nightlife | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| Outdoor recreation | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Public transit | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Healthcare | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Education | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Safety | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Dating opportunities | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| Employment opportunities | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| Commute time | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| I don’t know | **6** | **8** | **8** |

## Institution Snapshots

Provided below are findings snapshots for each institution in which responses were received.

### Central Virginia Community College

Of the five respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Central Virginia Community College, four (80%) reported being from the Lynchburg region originally, with one (20%) from outside of Virginia. Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of program areas including: Business (1, 25%); Health Sciences (1, 25%); Public Safety (1, 25%); and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (1, 25%).

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted cost of living (4, 100%) most frequently, followed by outdoor recreation (2, 50%) and employment opportunities (2, 50%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (4, 100%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (3, 75%) and location (2, 50%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted looking in the Lynchburg region (2, 50%) for employment and noted that they were not sure where they would look for employment (2, 50%) following graduation. All respondents noted an understanding of the career opportunities in the area (3, 100%) and believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (3, 100%).

Overall, respondents cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths including civic engagement opportunities (1, 100%); cost of living (3, 100%); affordable housing (2, 100%); high-speed internet (2, 100%); local retail and dining (2, 100%); outdoor recreation (3, 100%); public transit (1, 100%); healthcare (3, 100%); education (3, 100%); safety (2, 100%); dating opportunities (1, 100%); employment opportunities (2, 100%); and commute time (2, 100%). However, also noted the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cultural diversity (3, 100%); local retail and dining (1, 100%); music and nightlife (2, 100%); and public transit (1, 100%).

### Hollins University

Of the 148 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Hollins University, most were from outside of the state (50, 34%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 0 (0%) |
| New River Valley region | 5 (3%) |
| Roanoke region | 47 (32%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 30 (20%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 50 (34%) |
| Outside of the United States | 16 (11%) |
| TOTAL | **148** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of program areas, with the most frequent being Business (34, 23%); Psychology (22, 15%); English (21 (14%); and Economics (20, 14%). Most respondents from this institution were freshmen (55, 37%), compared to 36 (24%) seniors.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (96, 72%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (91, 68%) and safety/affordable housing (42, 31%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (43, 33%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (26, 20%) and location (19, 15%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted that they did not know (49, 37%) where they would be looking for employment, followed by outside of Virginia (45, 34%). The Region 2 sub-regions were ranked the lowest with the Lynchburg region at 0 (0%), New River Valley region with 1 (0.75%), and Roanoke region with 11 (8%). Most respondents did not know about career opportunities in the area (86, 64%); however, this could be due to the fact that most respondents were freshman. However, most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (69, 51%).

Overall, respondents cited the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, ranking all indicators higher than the other regions. However, also noted the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including civic engagement opportunities (22, 65%); cultural diversity (42, 82%); high-speed internet (21, 66%); local retail and dining (12, 44%); music and nightlife (24, 57%); outdoor recreation (10, 45%); public transit (44, 77%); healthcare (14, 47%); dating opportunities (40, 82%); employment opportunities (24, 65%); and commute time (15, 50%).

#### Alumni

There were two alumni that completed the alumni questions – one of which is currently employed in a position related to their field and one that is employed in a position unrelated to their field. Both respondents currently reside in the Roanoke region and cited a spouse/partner/significant other as the main reason for staying in the region, following by employment opportunities and quality of life.

### Jefferson College of Health Sciences

There was one respondent from this institution, who was originally from the Roanoke region and is a junior pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Nursing (accelerated pre-license). When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, the respondent indicated cost of living, local retail and dining, and employment opportunities as the most important factors. Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, the respondent reported that culture/environment was the most important indicator, followed by company reputation, and career advancement opportunities.

Upon graduation, this respondent plans to look in the Roanoke region for employment and noted that they were aware of career opportunities as well as opportunities for career advancement in the region. The respondent rated only the Roanoke region as having quality of life indicators that were strengths but also stated that the Roanoke region was lacking some quality of life indicators including: high-speed internet, music and nightlife, and dating opportunities.

### Liberty University

Of the 152 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Liberty University, most were from outside of the state (83, 55%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 42 (28%) |
| New River Valley region | 0 (0%) |
| Roanoke region | 2 (1%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 20 (13%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 83 (55%) |
| Outside of the United States | 5 (3%) |
| TOTAL | **152** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of program areas, with the most frequent being undergraduate bachelor’s programs (136, 89%) in the following areas: interdisciplinary studies (64, 45%) and business administration (14, 10%). Most respondents from this institution were seniors (60, 41%), with 21 alumni (14%) respondents.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (98, 82%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (82, 68%) and safety/affordable housing (32, 27%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked company mission (21, 18%) as the most important factor, followed by work-life balance (17, 15%) and culture/environment (18, 16%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted that they would most likely be looking outside of Virginia (59, 49%) for employment, followed by uncertainty for where they would want to look for employment (24, 20%). The Lynchburg region was sought after by 20 (17%) respondents, followed by the Roanoke region (2, 2%), and New River Valley region (1, 0.8%). Most respondents were aware career opportunities in the area (63, 53%) and most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (74, 62%).

Overall, respondents cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, ranking all indicators higher than the other regions. However, also noted the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking, ranking all indicators as lacking.

#### Alumni

There were 21 alumni that completed the alumni questions – most of which were employed in a position related to their area of study (15, 71%) in the Lynchburg region (18, 86%), with two (10%) living within Virginia but outside of Region 2 and one (5%) living outside of Virginia. For those that stayed in the region, respondents noted a spouse/partner/significant other (6, 33%) as the main reason for staying in the region, followed by affordability (7, 39%) and proximity to family (5, 28%). For those that left the region, respondents cited proximity to family and employment opportunities as the main reasons (1, 50%).

Overall, respondents cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, ranking all indicators higher than the other regions. However, also noted the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking, ranking all indicators as lacking.

### New River Community College

There was one respondent from this institution, who was originally from the New River Valley region and is an alumnus that received an associate of applied science degree in the Engineering Design Technology program. The respondent did not complete the rest of the survey.

### Radford University

Of the 146 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Radford University, most were from the state of Virginia but outside of the Region 2 (52, 36%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 8 (5%) |
| New River Valley region | 50 (34%) |
| Roanoke region | 22 (15%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 52 (36%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 12 (8%) |
| Outside of the United States | 2 (1%) |
| TOTAL | **146** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences (46, 31%) as the most frequent college represented and Psychology (19, 42%) as the most frequent program. Most respondents from this institution were seniors (65, 47%), with 12 (9%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (92, 75%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (80, 66%) and affordable housing (47, 39%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (32, 28%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (24, 21%) and work-life balance (18, 16%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted that they were going to be looking within the state of Virginia, but outside of Region 2 (33, 27%) for employment, followed by the New River Valley region (28, 23%) and outside of the state (27, 22%). Only two (2%) respondents stated they would be looking in the Lynchburg region for employment, while 12 (10%) were looking in the Roanoke region. Most respondents were aware of career opportunities in the area (76, 62%) and most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (81, 66%).

Overall, respondents cited the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including: civic engagement opportunities (44, 69%); cultural diversity (50, 64%); high-speed internet (54, 73%); local retail and dining (68, 79%); music and nightlife (64, 82%); public transit (54, 64%); healthcare (55, 76%); dating opportunities (46, 86%); and employment opportunities (64, 81%). Respondents noted the New River Valley region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including civic engagement opportunities (28, 62%); cultural diversity (34, 68%); high-speed internet (41, 80%); local retail and dining (40, 82%); music and nightlife (50, 89%); public transit (25, 60%); healthcare (20, 69%); education (15, 56%); dating opportunities (31, 76%); and employment opportunities (39, 75%).

#### Alumni

There were 11 alumni that completed the alumni questions – most of which are currently employed in a position related to their field (6, 55%). Most alumni respondents currently live in the Roanoke region (6, 50%), with four (33%) in the New River Valley region. For those that stayed in the region, most cited quality of life (4, 40%) as the main reason for staying in the region, followed by proximity to family (3, 30%). For those that left the region, most cited employment opportunities (1, 100%) as the number one reason for leaving the region, followed by proximity to family (1, 100%).

Overall, alumni cited the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including: civic engagement opportunities (6, 75%); cost of living (6, 55%); cultural diversity (6, 75%); high-speed internet (6, 67%); local retail and dining (7, 70%); music and nightlife (8, 89%); public transit (5, 63%); healthcare (4, 57%); education (7, 78%); dating opportunities (5, 71%); employment opportunities (6, 86%); and commute time (7, 78%). Respondents noted the New River Valley region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cost of living (3, 75%); cultural diversity (5, 83%); high-speed internet (4, 80%); local retail and dining (5, 100%); music and nightlife (3, 75%); outdoor recreation (2, 100%); healthcare (1, 50%); education (2, 100%); dating opportunities (2, 67%); employment opportunities (4, 100%); and commute time (2, 68%).

### Randolph College

Of the 82 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Randolph College, most were from the Lynchburg region (39, 48%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 39 (48%) |
| New River Valley region | 1 (1%) |
| Roanoke region | 0 (0%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 26 (32%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 12 (15%) |
| Outside of the United States | 4 (5%) |
| TOTAL | **82** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with Psychology (14, 22%) as the most frequent program. Most respondents from this institution were seniors (23, 29%), with 3 (4%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted cost of living (49, 69%) most frequently, followed by employment opportunities (46, 65%) and safety (28, 39%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (17, 25%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (15, 23%) and location (13, 19%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted most frequently that they were not sure where they were going to be looking for employment (31, 44%), followed by outside of Virginia (15, 21%) and the Lynchburg region (11, 15%). Only one (1%) respondent stated they would be looking in the Roanoke region for employment, while no respondents indicated they would be looking in the New River Valley region for employment. Most respondents were not aware of career opportunities in the area (38, 54%), despite most respondents classifying themselves as seniors. However, most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (47, 66%).

Overall, respondents cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, rating all by one indicator (music and nightlife) as strengths to the region. However, respondents also noted the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cost of living (7, 44%); cultural diversity (13, 57%); affordable housing (11, 58%); high-speed internet (15, 65%); music and nightlife (21, 72%); outdoor recreation (7, 54%); public transit (15, 63%); healthcare (18, 75%); safety (13, 62%); dating opportunities (16, 73%); and commute time (12, 67%).

#### Alumni

There were three alumni that completed the alumni questions – all indicating different responses to their job status (in a position related to their field, in a position unrelated to their field, unemployed and seeking employment). Most alumni respondents currently live in the Lynchburg region (2, 67%), with one (33%) living within Virginia but outside of Region 2. For those that stayed in the region, most cited a spouse/partner/significant other and proximity to family (1, 50%) as the main reason for staying in the region. For the one that left the region, they cited quality of life (1, 100%) as the number one reason for leaving the region, followed by employment opportunities (1, 100%).

Overall, alumni cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including: cost of living (2, 100%); cultural diversity (1, 100%); affordable housing (2, 100%); high-speed internet (2, 100%); local retail and dining (2, 100%); outdoor recreation (1, 100%); healthcare (1, 100%); education (2, 100%); and commute time (3, 100%). Respondents also cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cultural diversity (1, 100%); high-speed internet (1, 100%); music and nightlife (2, 100%); healthcare (1, 100%); dating opportunities (1, 100%); and employment opportunities (2, 100%).

### Roanoke College

Of the 81 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Roanoke College, most were from outside of the state (31, 38%)

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 3 (4%) |
| New River Valley region | 3 (4%) |
| Roanoke region | 24 (30%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 18 (22%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 31 (38%) |
| Outside of the United States | 2 (2%) |
| TOTAL | **81** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with Psychology and Sociology (14, 17%) as the most frequent program, followed by English and Communication Studies (13, 16%) and Business and Economics (12, 15%). Most respondents from this institution were seniors (38, 48%), with 0 (0%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (65, 83%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (51, 65%) and safety (27, 35%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (33, 44%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (22, 29%) and work-life balance (12, 16%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted most frequently that they were not sure where they were going to be looking for employment (29, 37%), followed by outside of Virginia (18, 23%) and within Virginia but outside of Region 2 (13, 17%). A total of 12 respondents (15%) indicated looking for employment in the Roanoke region, while only one (1%) respondent stated they would be looking in the New River Valley region for employment. No respondents indicated they would be looking in the Lynchburg region for employment. Most respondents were aware of career opportunities in the area (42, 55%) and most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (53, 69%).

Overall, respondents cited the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, rating all indicators as strengths to the region. However, respondents also noted the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cultural diversity (14, 58%); affordable housing (10, 59%); music and nightlife (18, 68%); public transit (21, 72%); healthcare (10, 50%); education (12, 57%); safety (15, 75%); dating opportunities (16, 63%); employment opportunities (13, 57%); and commute time (9, 56%).

### Sweet Briar College

Of the 41 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Randolph College, most were from outside of the state (17, 41%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 11 (27%) |
| New River Valley region | 0 (0%) |
| Roanoke region | 0 (0%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 11 (27%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 17 (42%) |
| Outside of the United States | 2 (5%) |
| TOTAL | **41** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with Political Science and Business (7, 19%) as the most frequent programs. Most respondents from this institution were freshmen (15, 37%), compared to 3 (7%) seniors, with 4 (10%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (28, 78%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (24, 67%) and safety (13, 36%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (13, 38%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (9, 26%) and work-life balance (6, 17%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted most frequently that they were not sure where they were going to be looking for employment (17, 47%), followed by outside of Virginia (10, 28%). Only one (3%) respondent stated they would be looking in the Lynchburg region for employment, while no respondents indicated they would be looking in the New River Valley or Roanoke regions for employment. Most respondents were not aware of career opportunities in the area (19, 53%), although most respondents classifying themselves as freshmen. However, most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (21, 58%).

Overall, respondents cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including civic engagement opportunities (12, 63%); cost of living (23, 88%); affordable housing (19, 83%); high-speed internet (16, 70%); local retail and dining (17, 68%); outdoor recreation (22, 81%); education (17, 77%); safety (14, 74%); employment opportunities (14, 78%); and commute time (14, 78%). However, respondents also noted the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including civic engagement opportunities (7, 54%); cultural diversity (14, 78%); high-speed internet (8, 62%); local retail and dining (11, 69%); music and nightlife (15, 83%); public transit (11, 69%); healthcare (10, 67%); dating opportunities (8, 57%); employment opportunities (12, 75%); and commute time (7, 58%).

#### Alumni

There were four alumni that completed the alumni questions – two indicating employment in a position related to their field and two indicating employment in a position unrelated to their field. Most alumni respondents currently live outside of Virginia (3, 75%), with one (25%) living within Virginia but outside of Region 2. Respondents reported they left the region for employment opportunities (3, 75%), quality of life (1, 50%), and affordability/proximity to family (2, 67%).

Overall, alumni cited the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including: civic engagement opportunities (2, 100%); cultural diversity (2, 100%); affordable housing (2, 100%); high-speed internet (2, 100%); local retail and dining (2, 100%); music and nightlife (2, 100%); outdoor recreation (2, 100%); dating opportunities (2, 100%); and employment opportunities (2, 100%). Respondents also cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cultural diversity (1, 100%); music and nightlife (1, 100%); outdoor recreation (1, 100%); education (1, 100%); dating opportunities (1, 100%); employment opportunities (1, 100%), and commute time (1, 100%).

### University of Lynchburg

Of the 94 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at the University of Lynchburg, most were from the Lynchburg region (50, 53%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 50 (53%) |
| New River Valley region | 0 (0%) |
| Roanoke region | 4 (4%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 26 (28%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 13 (14%) |
| Outside of the United States | 1 (1%) |
| TOTAL | **94** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with those in the School of Sciences (40, 43%) and, more specifically, in the Biology (9, 23%) program reported most frequently. Most respondents from this institution were seniors (39, 43%), with 10 (11%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (54, 74%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (50, 68%) and affordable housing (27, 37%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (24, 34%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (14, 20%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted most frequently that they were going to look in the Lynchburg region (24, 33%) for employment, followed by a statement that they are not sure where they will look for employment (17, 23%). Only two (3%) respondent stated they would be looking in the Roanoke region for employment, while no respondents indicated they would be looking in the New River Valley region for employment. Most respondents were aware of career opportunities in the area (47, 66%) and most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (50, 69%).

Overall, respondents cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, rating all by one indicator (music and nightlife) as strengths to the region. However, respondents also noted the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking, rating all but three indicators (commute time, outdoor recreation, and civic engagement opportunities) more frequently as lacking compared to the other regions.

#### Alumni

There were nine alumni that completed the alumni questions – five (56%) of which are employed in a position related to their field and four (44%) employed in a position unrelated to their field. Most alumni respondents currently live in the Lynchburg region (7, 78%), with two (22%) living in the Roanoke region. For all respondents, most cited a proximity to family (4, 44%) as the main reason for staying in the region, followed by affordability (3, 33%) and quality of life (4, 44%).

Overall, alumni cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including: civic engagement opportunities (5, 100%); cost of living (7, 78%); affordable housing (6, 86%); local retail and dining (6, 67%); outdoor recreation (8, 100%); healthcare (3, 60%); education (7, 88%); safety (7, 88%); and commute time (8, 89%). Respondents also cited the Lynchburg region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including civic engagement opportunities (2, 100%); cultural diversity (7, 100%); high-speed internet (3, 75%); local retail and dining (3, 100%); music and nightlife (4, 100%); outdoor recreation (2, 100%); public transit (5, 83%); healthcare (1, 100%); dating opportunities (5, 100%); and employment opportunities (3, 100%).

### Virginia Tech

Of the 375 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Virginia Tech, most were from within Virginia but outside of Region 2 (185, 49%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 14 (4%) |
| New River Valley region | 65 (17%) |
| Roanoke region | 17 (5%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 185 (49%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 67 (18%) |
| Outside of the United States | 27 (7%) |
| TOTAL | **375** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with those in the College of Engineering (111, 30%) and, more specifically, in the Computer Science (18, 16%) program reported most frequently. Most respondents from this institution were seniors (316, 85%), with 6 (2%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted employment opportunities (244, 70%) most frequently, followed by cost of living (200, 57%) and affordable housing (86, 25%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked compensation (86, 26%) as the most important factor, followed by benefits package (52, 15%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted most frequently that they were going to look in the state but outside of Region 2 (119, 34%) as well as outside of the state (119, 34%) for employment. Only four (1%) respondent stated they would be looking in the Lynchburg region for employment, while 18 (5%) respondents indicated they would be looking in the New River Valley region and 17 (5%) would be looking in the Roanoke region for employment. Most respondents were aware of career opportunities in the area (206, 60%) and most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (203, 59%).

Overall, respondents cited the New River Valley region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, rating the following as strengths in the region: civic engagement opportunities (104, 62%); cost of living (239, 95%); affordable housing (209, 89%); high-speed internet (115, 69%); outdoor recreation, (232, 94%); public transit (142, 80%); education (184, 89%); safety (194, 92%); dating opportunities (85, 64%); and commute time (124, 75%). However, respondents also noted the New River Valley region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking, rating the following as lacking: civic engagement opportunities (47, 64%); cultural diversity (129, 81%); high-speed internet (72, 79%); local retail and dining (87, 74%); music and nightlife (118, 77%); healthcare (68, 85%); dating opportunities (84, 79%); employment opportunities (95, 80%); and commute time (37, 61%).

#### Alumni

There were six alumni that completed the alumni questions – four (67%) of which are employed in a position related to their field, one (17%) employed in a position unrelated to their field, and one (17%) unemployed and seeking employment. Most alumni respondents currently live in the New River Valley region (2, 33%) and outside of the state (2, 33%), with one (17%) living in the Lynchburg region and no respondents in the Roanoke region. For all respondents, most cited a quality of life (2, 67%) as the main reason for staying in the region. For those that left the region, respondents were split on the main reason for leaving the region between employment opportunities (1, 33%), local amenities (1, 33%), and spouse/partner/significant other (1, 33%).

Overall, alumni cited the New River Valley region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, including: cost of living (4, 67%); cultural diversity (3, 60%); affordable housing (3, 60%); high-speed internet (4, 80%); outdoor recreation (6, 100%); public transit (4, 100%); healthcare (3, 100%); education (4, 80%); safety (5, 100%); and commute time (4, 100%). Respondents also cited the New River Valley region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking including cultural diversity (3, 100%); affordable housing (2, 100%); high-speed internet (1, 100%); local retail and dining (1, 100%); music and nightlife (3, 75%); healthcare (1, 100%); dating opportunities (3, 100%); and employment opportunities (4, 100%).

### Virginia University of Lynchburg

There was one respondent from this institution, who was originally from the Lynchburg region and is a sophomore that is in the Arts and Sciences program in the G.W. Hayes School of Arts and Sciences. The respondent did not complete the rest of the survey.

### Virginia Western Community College

Of the 19 respondents that indicated current or past enrollment at Virginia Tech, most were from the Roanoke region (16, 84%).

| Location | Frequency |
| --- | --- |
| Lynchburg region | 0 (0%) |
| New River Valley region | 0 (0%) |
| Roanoke region | 16 (84%) |
| Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions | 0 (0%) |
| Outside of Virginia | 3 (16%) |
| Outside of the United States | 0 (0%) |
| TOTAL | **19** |

Of those that answered the question, students represented a variety of programs of study, with those in the Health Professions program (7, 37%) reported most frequently. Most respondents from this institution were freshman (6, 33%), compared to three (17%) seniors, with 0 (0%) alumni.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

When asked about the indicators that are most important when considering a place to live after graduation, respondents noted cost of living (10, 59%) most frequently, followed by employment opportunities (9, 53%) and affordable housing (9, 53%). Thinking about the factors that are most important when deciding what company to work for after graduation, respondents ranked work-life balance (5, 33%) as the most important factor, followed by location (4, 27%).

Upon graduation, respondents noted most frequently that they were going to look in the Roanoke region (11, 65%) for employment. Only one (6%) respondent stated they would be looking in the New River Valley region for employment, while no respondents indicated they would be looking in the Lynchburg region for employment. Most respondents were aware of career opportunities in the area (11, 65%) and most believed there were opportunities for career advancement in the area (11, 65%).

Overall, respondents cited the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were strengths, rating all but one indicator (dating opportunities) more favorably than other regions. However, respondents also noted the Roanoke region as having the most quality of life indicators that were lacking, rating the following as lacking: cost of living (5, 71%); affordable housing (3, 60%); high-speed internet (2, 50%); music and nightlife (2, 50%); public transit (3, 60%); healthcare (2, 50%); dating opportunities (4, 100%); and employment opportunities (4, 57%).

# Appendix D: Survey Questions

## Survey of College Students

### Survey Introduction – Page 1

The Roanoke, Lynchburg, and New River Valley regions are dedicated to designing events and tools for young professionals to succeed. As we create exciting new programs for regional college students and young professionals, we want your input! The region has so much to offer and we want to make sure that you are connected so you can succeed.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. By clicking “Next,” you are agreeing to participate in this survey. However, your participation in this survey is voluntary and you can stop the survey at any time. Your responses are completely anonymous and will only be reported in the aggregate.

**If you complete the survey, you will be redirected to an external survey to request your contact information for a chance to win a $100 Amazon gift card. You are not required to enter your contact information; however, you will not be entered to win. Your responses to this survey will not be linked to the contact information obtained in the external survey.**

If you have any questions about the survey or study, please feel free to contact Kaley Schoeph, Senior Project Consultant at Thomas P. Miller & Associates at kschoeph@tpma-inc.com.

Thank you for your participation!

### Demographics – Page 2

**Page text**: **Lynchburg Region**: Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg. **New River Valley**: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg. **Roanoke Region**: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton.

1. **Please indicate where you are from originally:** [Multiple choice]
   1. Lynchburg Region (Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg)
   2. New River Valley (Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg)
   3. Roanoke Region (Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton)
   4. Within Virginia, but outside of the above areas
   5. Outside of Virginia
   6. Outside of the United States
2. **What college or university do you currently attend or most recently attended?** [Dropdown list]
   1. American National University
   2. Central Virginia Community College
   3. Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
   4. Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
   5. Ferrum College
   6. Hollins University
   7. Jefferson College of Health Sciences
   8. Liberty University
   9. New River Community College
   10. Radford University
   11. Randolph College
   12. Roanoke College
   13. Sweet Briar College
   14. University of Lynchburg
   15. Virginia Tech
   16. Virginia University of Lynchburg
   17. Virginia Western Community College
   18. None of the above [skip to end of survey]

### Colleges/Majors – Page 3

1. **What is/was your primary college/department/school of study at [insert institution name from Q2]?**

[List customized for each institution: For instance, if a respondent selects that they attended American National University in Q2, the language in this question will be, “What is/was your primary area of interest at American National University?” and options would be: Accounting and Business, Health Science, Information Technology, and Undecided.]

* 1. Customized list based on institution with skip logic from previous question to questions for that institution
  2. Undecided

1. **What is/was your current, specific field of study? Select all that apply.**

[List customized by the choice to Q3. Using the same example as above, this question will also be customized for each institution’s majors. Again, for American National University, if the respondent selected ‘Accounting and Business’ in Q3, the question would be, “What is/was your field of study in Accounting and Business?” with options listed as: Accounting, Advanced TESOL, Business Administration, Business Administration Accounting, Business Administration Accounting Baccalaureate, Business Administration Management, Business Administration Management Baccalaureate, Master of Business Administration, Paralegal, Paralegal Certificate, and Professional TESOL.]

1. Customized list based on institution’s majors with skip logic from previous question to questions for that institution

### Study Information – Page 4

1. **Select the following award(s) you anticipate/received upon graduation? Select all that apply.** [Checkboxes]
2. Certificate
3. Diploma
4. Associate Degree
5. Bachelor’s Degree
6. Master’s Degree
7. Doctorate Degree
8. Professional Degree
9. Undecided
10. **What is your current class status at your institution?** [Multiple choice]
11. Freshman
12. Sophomore
13. Junior
14. Senior
15. Graduate Student
16. Alumni [skip to Q16]
17. Not Applicable

### Living and Working – Page 5

**Page text**: **Lynchburg Region**: Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg. **New River Valley**: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg. **Roanoke Region**: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton.

1. **Select the top three indicators that are most important to you when considering where you will live after graduation.** [Select top three]
2. Civic Engagement Opportunities
3. Cost of Living
4. Cultural Diversity
5. Affordable Housing
6. High-Speed Internet
7. Local Retail and Dining
8. Music and Nightlife
9. Outdoor Recreation
10. Public Transit
11. Healthcare
12. Education
13. Safety
14. Dating Opportunities
15. Employment Opportunities
16. Commute Time
17. **Rank the following factors by their importance in deciding what company to work for after graduation; where 1=most important and 10=least important.** [Ranking]
18. Compensation
19. Benefits Package
20. Location
21. Culture/Environment
22. Company Mission
23. Work-Life Balance
24. Educational Opportunities/Professional Development
25. Career Advancement Opportunities
26. Company Stability
27. Company Reputation
28. **Upon completing your degree and/or certificate, where will you be primarily looking for employment? Please select one.** [Multiple choice]
29. Lynchburg Region
30. New River Valley
31. Roanoke Region
32. Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions
33. Outside of Virginia
34. Outside of the United States
35. I don’t know

### Career Search – Page 6

**Page text**: “Region” refers to the following cities: Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem; and the following counties: Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

1. **Are you aware of career opportunities in your field within the region?** [Multiple choice]
   1. Yes
   2. No
2. **What resources are you utilizing to conduct your employment search? Please select all that apply.** [Checkboxes]

[Q11 only shown for respondents indicating they are a Junior, Senior, or Graduate Student]

1. Alumni networking
2. Campus Career Center
3. Career fairs and other campus events
4. Local Career Center
5. Online job search (e.g., Monster and Indeed)
6. Private employment agency
7. Social media
8. Other (please specify) [Textbox]
9. **Do you believe the region offers opportunities for career advancement in your field?** [Multiple choice]
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. I don’t know

### Retention and Attraction – Page 7

**Page text**: **Lynchburg Region**: Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg. **New River Valley**: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg. **Roanoke Region**: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton.

1. **What quality of life indicators are STRENGTHS in each of the following regions? Please select all that apply.** [Matrix]

|  | Lynchburg Region | New River Valley | Roanoke Region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic Engagement Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Cost of Living |  |  |  |
| Cultural Diversity |  |  |  |
| Affordable Housing |  |  |  |
| High-Speed Internet |  |  |  |
| Local Retail and Dining |  |  |  |
| Music and Nightlife |  |  |  |
| Outdoor Recreation |  |  |  |
| Public Transit |  |  |  |
| Healthcare |  |  |  |
| Education |  |  |  |
| Safety |  |  |  |
| Dating Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Employment Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Commute Time |  |  |  |
| I don’t know |  |  |  |

1. **What quality of life indicators are LACKING in each of the following regions? Please select all that apply.** [Matrix]

|  | Lynchburg Region | New River Valley | Roanoke Region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic Engagement Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Cost of Living |  |  |  |
| Cultural Diversity |  |  |  |
| Affordable Housing |  |  |  |
| High-Speed Internet |  |  |  |
| Local Retail and Dining |  |  |  |
| Music and Nightlife |  |  |  |
| Outdoor Recreation |  |  |  |
| Public Transit |  |  |  |
| Healthcare |  |  |  |
| Education |  |  |  |
| Safety |  |  |  |
| Dating Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Employment Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Commute Time |  |  |  |
| I don’t know |  |  |  |

### Employer Interaction – Page 8

**Page text**: **“**Region” refers to the following cities: Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem; and the following counties: Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

1. **What types of interactions have you had with regional employers? Please select all that apply.** [Checkboxes]
   1. Apprenticeships
   2. Internships (paid, unpaid, and co-ops)
   3. Job shadowing
   4. Mentorship
   5. One-on-one meetings
   6. Interviews
   7. Volunteering opportunities
   8. Campus events (e.g., career fairs and guest speakers)
   9. I have not had any interaction with regional employers

### Alumni Questions – Page 9

[This series of questions is only displayed for those that indicate their class status as Alumni]

**Page text**: **Lynchburg Region**: Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg. **New River Valley**: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg. **Roanoke Region**: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton.

1. **Please select the statement that best reflects your current job status.** [Multiple choice]
   1. I am employed in a position **related** to my area of study
   2. I am employed in a position **unrelated** to my area of study
   3. I am pursuing further education
   4. I am unemployed and seeking employment
   5. I am unemployed and not seeking employment

1. **Where do you currently live?** [Multiple choice]
   1. Lynchburg Region [continue to Q18]
   2. New River Valley [continue to Q18]
   3. Roanoke Region [continue to Q18]
   4. Within Virginia, but outside of the above regions [skip to Q19]
   5. Outside of Virginia [skip to Q19]
   6. Outside of the United States [skip to Q19]

### Alumni Staying in Region – Page 10

1. **Rank the following reasons why you chose to live in the [insert region from Q17] following graduation based on level of importance; where 1 = most important, 6 = least important.** [Ranking]
   1. Proximity to family [skip to Q20]
   2. Employment opportunities [skip to Q20]
   3. Quality of life (safety, low traffic, etc.) [skip to Q20]
   4. Local amenities (retail, dining, entertainment, etc.) [skip to Q20]
   5. Affordability (housing/rent costs, etc.) [skip to Q20]
   6. Spouse/Partner/Significant other [skip to Q20]

### Alumni Leaving Region – Page 11

**Page text**: “Region” refers to the following cities: Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem; and the following counties: Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

1. **Rank the following reasons why you chose to leave the region following graduation based on level of importance. 1 = most important, 6 = least important.** [Ranking]
   1. Proximity to family
   2. Employment opportunities
   3. Quality of life (safety, low traffic, etc.)
   4. Local amenities (retail, dining, entertainment, etc.)
   5. Affordability (housing/rent costs, etc.)
   6. Spouse/Partner/Significant other

### Alumni Attraction and Retention – Page 12

**Page text**: **Lynchburg Region**: Amherst County, Appomattox County, Bedford County, Campbell County, City of Lynchburg. **New River Valley**: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, City of Radford, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg. **Roanoke Region**: Alleghany County, Botetourt County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, City of Covington, Town of Vinton.

1. **What quality of life indicators are STRENGTHS in each of the following regions? Please select all that apply.** [Matrix]

|  | Lynchburg Region | New River Valley | Roanoke Region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic Engagement Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Cost of Living |  |  |  |
| Cultural Diversity |  |  |  |
| Affordable Housing |  |  |  |
| High-Speed Internet |  |  |  |
| Local Retail and Dining |  |  |  |
| Music and Nightlife |  |  |  |
| Outdoor Recreation |  |  |  |
| Public Transit |  |  |  |
| Healthcare |  |  |  |
| Education |  |  |  |
| Safety |  |  |  |
| Dating Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Employment Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Commute Time |  |  |  |
| I don’t know |  |  |  |

1. **What quality of life indicators are LACKING in each of the following regions? Please select all that apply.** [Matrix]

|  | Lynchburg Region | New River Valley | Roanoke Region |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Civic Engagement Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Cost of Living |  |  |  |
| Cultural Diversity |  |  |  |
| Affordable Housing |  |  |  |
| High-Speed Internet |  |  |  |
| Local Retail and Dining |  |  |  |
| Music and Nightlife |  |  |  |
| Outdoor Recreation |  |  |  |
| Public Transit |  |  |  |
| Healthcare |  |  |  |
| Education |  |  |  |
| Safety |  |  |  |
| Dating Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Employment Opportunities |  |  |  |
| Commute Time |  |  |  |
| I don’t know |  |  |  |

--End of survey--

## Sweepstakes Contact Information

The contact information requested in this form will **not** be linked to the answers provided in the previous survey and will be stored securely by a third-party not associated with the institution.

Please enter in all contact information accurately and completely to be entered to win a $100 Amazon gift card.

Once a winner is chosen at random, an email will be sent to the individual using the contact information provided in the form below. Following conclusion of the sweepstakes, all contact information obtained in this survey will be destroyed.

1. Do you wish to add your contact information for a chance to win a $100 Amazon gift card? If you select yes, you are agreeing to provide your contact information.
   1. Yes [if selected, skip to Q2]
   2. No [if selected, skip to end of survey]
2. Please enter your contact information below for a chance to win a $100 Amazon gift card.
   1. First and Last Name [textbox]
   2. Email Address [textbox]

--End of survey--

1. Based on the data received, and response numbers, the Team did not run any complex univariate or multivariate analyses. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Respondents that indicated ‘None of the above’ were directed to the end of the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Respondents that indicated ‘None of the above’ were directed to the end of the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Respondents that indicated ‘None of the above’ were directed to the end of the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Respondents that indicated ‘None of the above’ were directed to the end of the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)