



COVID-19 Recovery Plan: Securing our Economic Recovery & Creating a More Equitable Future

The COVID-19 pandemic has had detrimental effects nationwide and in Virginia that have been exacerbated by President Trump's year-long failure to take this virus seriously and address it head-on. Virginia has seen more than 280,000 COVID-19 cases, we have lost over 4,400 Virginians, and unemployment during the pandemic has hit working families, small businesses, and communities of color the hardest.

Governor Northam has shown strong leadership during the pandemic and made great strides in advancing testing, ensuring access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and providing support to people who have lost their jobs. He and his team have worked diligently to get this pandemic behind us so that we can focus on rebuilding our economy. Virginia will continue to face the challenges posed by the pandemic for years to come and we will have to continue the tireless work to recover physically, economically and emotionally. Virginia's next Governor must continue to build on the progress made with bold and decisive actions to keep our communities safe, protect our employees, rebuild our thriving network of small businesses and invest in mental health services to help Virginians recover from this dark time.

Successful recovery will require a strong relationship with the federal government to ensure that future COVID-relief packages are crafted in a way that meets our communities' needs and that Virginia receives the necessary funds to rebuild our economy. As a close friend of President-Elect Biden's for more than 40-years, and a close friend of many members of the new administration, Virginians can count on Terry to collaborate closely with the Biden administration on future relief packages. As Virginia's 72nd Governor, Terry worked closely with then-Vice President Biden and the Obama Administration to secure federal grants to rebuild the Port of Virginia, turning years of poor performance and lost revenues into record results, increasing jobs and millions in profits. As new federal COVID-19 relief dollars flow into Virginia, Terry will invest them strategically to jumpstart our economy, ensure families have access to essential resources, and build Virginia back stronger than ever.

Keep Virginians Safe at Work, at School and in our Communities: In order to reopen safely, our schools and businesses must have reliable access to PPE, rapid testing, contact tracing and vaccines. The Northam administration has paved the way on these issues, but the next Governor

will inherit many of the same complex issues. That is why Terry is already focused on what he will do as Governor to keep Virginia moving in the right direction. Together, these measures will keep our communities safe and prevent further workforce and education disruptions. Terry's plan will:

- **Continue to build capacity for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and vaccine dissemination.** Terry will continue to provide Virginians with the resources they need to stay safe during this pandemic. That includes continuing to aggressively seek contracts for COVID-19 tests so that every Virginian has access to a rapid test when they need it, launching an education campaign on COVIDWISE to bolster existing contact tracing efforts, and ensuring that every Virginian has access to and receives a COVID-19 vaccine. Terry will also continue engaging with health experts and take bold action to keep Virginians safe, and to ensure the Commonwealth is prepared for future potential crises or pandemics.
- **Cut down on costs and supply-chain issues by bringing PPE and pharmaceutical manufacturing to Virginia.** Virginia has a long history of manufacturing excellence. We must leverage our capabilities and bring PPE and other life science manufacturing to Virginia, especially as businesses continue evolving their practices to meet existing needs. PPE will remain an ongoing need for the healthcare industry in a post-COVID world, as will affordable medications for Virginians. Terry recognizes how critical it is to bring pharmaceutical manufacturing to Virginia to cut down on costs of expensive prescription drugs. During his administration, he traveled to San Francisco and helped VCU secure its largest ever private grant of \$25 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to create its Medicines for All Institute¹. That visit also led to a Richmond-based startup securing a \$354 million federal contract to expand pharmaceutical manufacturing in the U.S., including ingredients for generic drugs that will be used to treat hospitalized patients with COVID-19². Terry will build on this by re-shoring manufacturing industries to Virginia, which will create jobs, cut down on costs and eliminate supply-chain issues so that we can quickly and affordably deploy these resources to our communities.

Support our Workers: Our workforce is the backbone of our economy and in order to rebuild after this pandemic we have to make sure our workers have access to the support they need, including necessary compensation, benefits and affordable childcare. Many of these efforts can be achieved by leveraging strong, collaborative relationships with the new Biden administration and drawing down every federal dollar available to Virginia. Terry's plan will:

- **Ensure that every Virginian has access to paid sick days.** Nearly half of Virginia's private sector workers do not have access to paid sick days, meaning that employees must

¹Admin. (2017, August 30). VCU receives historic \$25 million grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation The Commonwealth Times. Retrieved from <https://commonwealthtimes.org/2017/08/29/vcu-receives-historic-25-million-grant-bill-melinda-gates-foundation/>

²Times-Dispatch, M. M. (2020, May 23). Phlow contract crowns Virginia push to become 'leader in innovation'. Retrieved from https://dailyprogress.com/news/state/phlow-contract-crowns-virginia-push-to-become-leader-in-innovation/article_8f5716c2-cc77-5c6c-81f4-932df65485df.html

choose between getting paid or taking time to care for themselves or their families. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how critical this issue is not only to supporting low-wage workers, but also to ensuring that employees who are sick do not come to work and spread illnesses like COVID-19. It is past time that we provide this necessary benefit to Virginians.

- **Provide hazard pay for essential workers.** Since the onset of COVID-19, essential workers have risked their health to keep our economy open and to make sure all Virginians have access to food, medications, and other critical goods and services. We also know that many of these workers are low-income, and approximately 40% are Black, Latino, Asian-American/Pacific Islander, or other non-white categories³. Terry applauds Governor Northam for providing hazard pay to home health care workers, and recognizes how critical it is that future COVID-relief packages from the federal government include hazard pay for all essential workers. Terry will work with President-Elect Biden to get this done.
- **Ensure every Virginian has access to unemployment benefits when they need them.** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Virginia had enjoyed low unemployment rates for several years. In fact, our unemployment rate when Terry left office was 3.3% and was below 3% in February 2020. Unfortunately, this number more than tripled during the height of the pandemic, peaking at 11.2% in April before decreasing steadily through October to 5.3%⁴. This has put tremendous stress on our workforce and families and it has also demonstrated that we must invest in infrastructure that allows us to efficiently deliver benefits to Virginians, making us ready when a crisis hits. As Governor, Terry will smartly invest those funds to rebuild our unemployment fund and ensure that Virginians have access to the benefits they need until we can get them back to work. Terry will also ensure that the Virginia Employment Commission has the support and resources it needs to quickly and effectively serve our Commonwealth.
- **Strengthen access to basic needs like nutritious food, housing and health care for all Virginians.** Within the next year, 445,000 more Virginians are projected to experience food insecurity⁵, and thousands of Virginians are facing evictions because of COVID-19. Adults cannot be productive members of the workforce and students cannot succeed in the classroom if they are unable to meet their basic needs. A strong safety net is a critical element of a strong economy. Under Terry's leadership, Virginia served 13 million more meals to students, awarded millions of dollars in affordable housing grants and fought tirelessly to expand Medicaid. As our next Governor, he will leverage federal and state resources to ensure that all Virginians have access to nutritious food, stable, affordable

³Mendes, K., & Goren, L. (2020, April 22). Profile of Essential Workers in Virginia During COVID-19: Women, People of Color, and Immigrants Are Important Contributors In Front-line Virginia Industries. <https://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org/2020/04/22/profile-of-essential-workers-in-virginia-during-covid-19-women-people-of-color-and-immigrants-are-important-contributors-in-front-line-virginia-industries/>

⁴Virginia Economy at a Glance. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.va.htm>

⁵Virginia Roadmap to End Hunger. (2020). Retrieved from <https://feedva.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Virginia-Roadmap-to-End-Hunger.pdf>

housing, and health care so that everyone can thrive in the new economy. That includes continuing to bolster rent relief programs and eviction-prevention programs.

- **Increase funding for Virginia’s incentive grant fund to reopen child care facilities and provide subsidized care for low-income families.** Many child care facilities have closed without plans to reopen during this pandemic. Getting Virginians, particularly women, back to work is essential and requires access to affordable child care. Even in 2020, women still disproportionately bear the burden of caregiving responsibilities. If we don’t act now to address the lack of quality, affordable child care, we are at risk of having a generation of women forced out of the workforce. Access to affordable child care should not still be a BOLD idea, but it is, and it’s one we MUST deliver on for women and families across the Commonwealth. That is why Terry will build upon the incentive grant fund Governor Northam established and help childcare facilities reopen and stay open.

Rebuild our Thriving Network of Small Businesses: Small businesses, particularly Black-owned businesses, have been hit the hardest by this pandemic, and the return of our booming economy relies upon them thriving again. That will require bold efforts to provide access to capital, streamline regulatory processes and prepare today’s workers for the jobs of tomorrow. Terry’s plan will:

- **Lift up Black and Brown-owned businesses.** The COVID-19 pandemic has been detrimental to small businesses, and has disproportionately impacted Black- and Brown-owned businesses. A national report from June indicated that 41% of Black business owners and 32% of Latinx business owners had closed their businesses during the pandemic, compared to 17% of white business owners⁶. This is unacceptable and Virginia must take action to support Black- and Brown-owned businesses. During his administration, Terry bolstered Small Women and Minority-Owned (SWaM) businesses by creating a SWaM micro-loan program. Terry will build upon this effort and create a pilot program within the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to support small businesses with capital and regular access to training and technical support that will lead to successful, thriving businesses.
- **Create a revolving fund to provide low-interest loans to small businesses.** Small businesses are essential to the vitality of the economy and thousands in Virginia have closed with no plans to reopen due to the pandemic. We must provide small businesses access to capital so they can more easily adapt, keep their employees and customers safe, and keep their doors open. This program will specifically target historically disadvantaged populations and communities that have lacked access to capital.
- **Transform the regulatory process and increase support for small businesses.** For too long, Virginia’s regulatory process and business support programs have favored large companies. While large companies play an essential role in our economy, small

⁶Fairlie, R. W. (2020, June). The Impact of COVID-19 on Small Business Owners: Evidence of Early-Stage Losses from the April 2020 Current Population Survey. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27309/w27309.pdf

businesses remain the backbone of our economy and our communities. This is especially true in rural communities. The impacts of COVID-19 that have caused many small businesses to close have also highlighted the need to rethink our regulatory structures and support programs so that small and minority-owned businesses can access the resources they need to get started and thrive. During his administration, Terry bolstered SWaM businesses by creating a SWaM micro-loan program. He will continue this work and transform our regulatory process and ensure that small businesses have access to the support they need to be successful.

Invest in the Best in the Nation Workforce of the Future: Virginia has led the nation in its education and workforce systems after redesigning them to make workplace skills and preparedness the driving principles and ultimate goals of the systems. However, this pandemic has eliminated countless jobs that won't return once we get this pandemic behind us. We have to invest in workers of all ages and enable them to step into new, high-demand jobs. Terry's plan will:

- **Retrain and re-skill employees for high-demand jobs.** Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, many of the jobs that have been lost may not return once we get this pandemic behind us. That means Virginians are going to be seeking new opportunities, potentially in totally new sectors, which will require new skill sets. We must seize this opportunity and ensure that we can retrain people of all ages to step into new, high-demand jobs. Under Terry's leadership, Virginia passed the first-in-the-nation New Economy Workforce Credentials Act, allowing Virginians to get the skills and credentials they need to step into high-demand jobs without a college degree. Graduates of these programs have seen 25-50% increases in pay in take-home pay⁷. He also set an aggressive goal of graduating 50,000 Virginians with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-health sciences (STEM-H) credentials -- a goal his administration exceeded in 2017 with the issuance of 50,361 STEM-H credentials⁸. Terry will build on these successes and partner with our community colleges, job-training programs and institutions of higher education to get Virginians back to work.
- **Partner with the business sector to create virtual internships and apprenticeships.** Reimagining our K12 education system and making sure every student has equitable access to a world-class education is Terry's number one priority, but we also have to invest in high-quality internships and apprenticeships for Virginians of all ages. We know that on-the-job training is critical to success in any job, and this pandemic has driven innovation in developing virtual learning opportunities. There is no reason that a student in Bristol or a person in Petersburg cannot partner with an emerging technology company or support a small business through a virtual internship or other program. Now is the time to think big and create a pipeline of workers for high-demand jobs.

⁷Job Training Programs: VA: FastForward. (2020, October 16). Retrieved from <https://www.fastforwardva.org/>

⁸Truong, D. (2018, January 14). Under McAuliffe, an emphasis on science and technology education. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/mcauliffe-touts-education-initiatives-as-he-departs-office/2018/01/14/86ad0de6-ecc5-11e7-9f92-10a2203f6c8d_story.html

- **Promote the Commonwealth to grow our economy and create new jobs.** In order to grow our economy and attract new and diverse businesses that create more good paying jobs for our citizens, we must invest in new and aggressive marketing strategies to better promote Virginia across the country and around the world. Virginia is recognized as the best state for business in the nation, but the competition is looming and doing more to promote themselves here and abroad. This is especially critical in a post-COVID economy where unemployed Virginians are going to be seeking new employment opportunities, potentially in different fields.

Prioritize Mental and Behavioral Health: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Virginians were in dire need of access to mental health care and substance use treatment, and the spread of this virus and the measures required to combat it have demonstrated a growing need to invest in our mental health system. Terry’s plan will:

- **Increase funding for the Virginia Mental Health Access Project (VMAP).** Virginia has faced critical shortages in child psychologists and psychiatrists for many years, and that shortage has only been exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19 that are leaving more children in need of access to services. This is especially true for low-income and minority children. This program, established under Governor Northam, provides essential training to pediatricians and creates regional teams of mental health providers to serve our children. One regional team is able to serve over 250 primary care physicians and over 400,000 children⁹. It is critical that we expand this program to all regions of the state, and expand it to cover children ages 0-5, postpartum women, and young adults up to age 26.
- **Allocate new funding for substance use disorder prevention, harm reduction and treatment.** Virginia and states across the nation have been fighting the opioid and addiction epidemic for years, but COVID-19 has upended years of progress. People with substance use disorders have been at increased risk during this pandemic due to lack of treatment availability, economic strains and the impacts of isolation and social distancing. In recent months, we have tragic increases in overdose deaths. In fact, the Virginia Department of Health reported 66% increases in overdose deaths this year and stated that this year is expected to be the worst year for fatal overdoses in Virginia’s history, with a projection of over 2,000 deaths¹⁰. During his administration Terry championed efforts to address the opioid and addiction epidemic, creating the Governor’s Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse, declaring the opioid overdose epidemic a public health emergency, hosting the Appalachian Opioid Summit with five neighboring states, adopting countless bills to reduce over-prescribing and increase accountability, and securing millions in funding. As fentanyl-related deaths and overall drug overdose deaths continue to rise, we must prioritize new funding for prevention, harm reduction and treatment programs.

⁹FAQs: Virginia Mental Health Access Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.vmap.org/faqs>

¹⁰Hobron, K. R. (2020, October). Fatal Drug Overdose Quarterly Report. Retrieved from <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/18/2020/10/Quarterly-Drug-Death-Report-FINAL-Q2-2020.pdf>

- **Leverage federal dollars to support Permanent Supportive Housing.** Having access to safe, stable housing is a fundamental need for every human being, and we know that securing and maintaining housing for individuals experiencing mental illness or a substance use disorder can be particularly challenging. In fact, studies demonstrate that 25% of people experiencing homelessness have a serious mental illness, and nearly half have any kind of mental illness¹¹. In addition to increasing access to affordable housing, we must invest in wraparound services that help vulnerable populations maintain stable housing. Permanent Supportive Housing is an evidence-based, cost-effective model that merges affordable housing with wraparound services to support a person experiencing mental illness or a substance use disorder. We know that Medicaid covers these wraparound services, so we must build on current efforts to draw down every federal dollar available to Virginia and provide this critical service during and after this pandemic.
- **Focus mental health resources on early intervention and supporting Virginians across the lifespan.** For too many years, Virginia’s mental health system has been underfunded and our community members have paid the price. Under Terry’s leadership, Virginia adopted and began implementing STEP-VA, which is a comprehensive plan to reform our public mental health system and ensure quality, consistent care throughout the Commonwealth. Through STEP-VA, we have increased capacity within our Community Services Boards (CSBs) and ensured that every person has same-day access to services. However, Virginia still ranks 37th when it comes to access to care, meaning too many Virginians lack access to care and the services they need¹². That is shameful given that Virginia is the 10th wealthiest state in the nation. We must continue building upon the work that has been done to implement STEP-VA and the Behavioral Health Redesign to ensure that every Virginian has access to the care they need. That includes investing in prevention and early intervention services to provide care before a person begins experiencing a behavioral health crisis. We must also ensure that we are leveraging every federal dollar available to Virginia through Medicaid.

¹¹Torrey, D. F. (2019, January 23). Homeless Mentally Ill Facts and Figures. Retrieved from <https://mentalillnesspolicy.org/consequences/homeless-mentally-ill.html>

Dohler, E., Bailey, P., Rice, D., & Katch, H. (2016, May 31). Supportive Housing Helps Vulnerable People Live and Thrive in the Community. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/supportive-housing-helps-vulnerable-people-live-and-thrive-in-the-community>

¹²Reinert, M., Ngyuen, T., & Fritze, D. (2020). The State of Mental Health in America 2020. Retrieved from https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/State%20of%20Mental%20Health%20in%20America%20-%202020_0.pdf