



Rappahannock Goodwill Industries Success Story – George Washington

Sean was referred to the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program through the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program to pursue his career objective of becoming a licensed HVAC Technician. In August 2023, he enrolled in the HVAC Apprenticeship Program at Germanna Community College.

Upon eligibility determination, Sean qualified for FastForward funding, which allowed for a blended funding model to fully support his training through Levels 1 to 4 of the program. This comprehensive approach ensured that Sean received both the technical instruction and hands-on experience required for success in the field. His participation in the apprenticeship provided valuable on-the-job training, further enhancing his skill set and employability.

Sean successfully completed the HVAC Technician Program in May 2025 and earned his HVAC Technician license. He is now gainfully employed in the HVAC industry and on a clear path toward long-term career stability.

Sean's progress illustrates the effectiveness of coordinated workforce programs in supporting dislocated workers through skills training and into in-demand employment opportunities.

Rappahannock Community College Success Story - Northern Neck

Libby first came to Rappahannock Community College (RCC) in May 2024 with a clear goal in mind: to become a welder. Having previously earned an associate's degree in agriculture and most recently employed as a waitress, she was ready to pursue a new career path in a high-demand skilled trade.

After expressing interest in the welding program, Libby applied for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. Upon completing all eligibility requirements, she was successfully enrolled and immediately demonstrated exceptional dedication and performance as a student.

Libby began her training with the SMAW (Stick) welding course, followed by additional instruction in GMAW (MIG), FCAW (Flux-Cored), GTAW (TIG), and pipe welding. Through this rigorous training sequence, she earned an impressive total of six industry-recognized welding credentials—three 1G certifications (horizontal welding) and three 3G certifications (vertical welding).

In February 2025, Libby secured full-time employment as a welder at a local marina specializing in tugboat fabrication. She has excelled in her role and reports a deep sense of satisfaction and pride in her work.

Libby's journey is a powerful example of how adult education and workforce development programs can open doors to new and rewarding careers. We congratulate Libby on her achievements and wish her continued success in the welding industry.

Rappahannock Community College Success Story – Middle Peninsula

Mitch came to Rappahannock Community College (RCC) with a clear goal: to become a professional truck driver. Having previously held various management positions in the retail sector, Mitch was ready to transition into a more stable and in-demand career field.

After obtaining his CDL-A learner's permit, Mitch applied for assistance through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program. Upon completing the eligibility requirements, he was successfully enrolled and began CDL training in March 2025.

Mitch demonstrated strong commitment and successfully completed the program. In April, he earned his Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A). Shortly thereafter, he accepted an over-the-road position with a large trucking company. While the experience provided valuable industry exposure, Mitch quickly realized that long-haul trucking was not the right fit for his lifestyle and priorities.

Returning home, Mitch promptly secured local employment with a logging company, where he now enjoys a fulfilling and stable position. He reports doing very well and is highly satisfied with his new role.

Mitch's journey exemplifies the importance of aligning career goals with personal needs, and the value of workforce training in creating flexible pathways to employment. We commend Mitch for his perseverance and wish him continued success in his new career.

Eastern Shore Community College Success Stories – Eastern Shore

Story #1

Kirstin, a determined single mother of three, began her postsecondary journey in 2012 at Eastern Shore Community College, enrolling in the Liberal Arts program. Despite the challenges of raising young children and navigating limited employment opportunities, Kirstin remained committed to advancing her education. With the support of her parents, she continued to pursue her academic and career goals while caring for her family. Her greatest motivation came from her children and the desire to improve their quality of life.

Recognizing the need for long-term stability and career advancement, Kirstin made the decision to pursue a healthcare credential. Her determination led her to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), a significant milestone in her journey toward self-sufficiency. However, even after earning her credential, Kirstin continued to face challenges balancing work, family responsibilities, and financial pressures.

Through the guidance of her academic advisor, Kirstin learned about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. Upon enrolling, she received the support and resources necessary to overcome ongoing barriers to success. The WIOA program provided assistance that allowed her to continue moving forward without sacrificing her responsibilities as a parent.

Kirstin's resilience and perseverance ultimately paid off. Today, she is employed by Eastern Shore Rural Health Express Care, where she proudly serves her community as a healthcare professional. Her journey represents not only a personal triumph, but also a powerful example of how strategic support systems can transform lives.

Kirstin Gray's story is a testament to the enduring power of persistence, the importance of accessible support, and the impact that workforce development programs like WIOA can have on individuals striving for a better future—for themselves and their families.

Story #2

Sallie served as a grant accountant at Eastern Shore Community College when a statewide restructuring initiative by the Virginia Community College System led to the elimination of several business office positions, including hers. As part of the WIOA Rapid Response services, Sallie attended an informational session and subsequently learned she qualified as a dislocated worker. Motivated to take control of her future, Sallie scheduled an appointment and made the decision to pursue a career transition.

With a strong interest in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and confirmation through career assessments that the field aligned with her skills and goals, Sallie enrolled in a GIS certification program at Old Dominion University. She successfully completed the rigorous three-semester training program and earned her professional certification.

Despite this accomplishment, Sallie faced challenges finding sustainable employment in the GIS field, as local opportunities were part-time and lacked the benefits she needed. She declined offers from A&N Electric Cooperative and Accomack County due to the part-time nature of the roles, and instead accepted a full-time position as a Child Protective Services Staff Assistant with the Accomack County Department of Social Services.

Sallie has since found fulfillment in her role, supporting critical services that help reunite and stabilize families. Although now semi-retired, she continues to work part-time and remains passionate about GIS. While the high cost of specialized equipment and software has delayed her ability to pursue GIS independently, Sallie continues to express a strong interest in the field.

Sallie's story exemplifies adaptability, lifelong learning, and the value of workforce programs in supporting career pivots. Her journey demonstrates how even when initial career goals evolve, meaningful and impactful work remains within reach with the right support and determination.

Rappahannock Goodwill Industries Youth Success Story – George Washington

At just 22 years old, Cassie has already demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination. As a former foster youth and single mother, she has balanced multiple roles—student, employee, caregiver, and parent—while pursuing a better future for herself and her family. Her decision to relocate to Fredericksburg, Virginia, marked a pivotal step in her journey toward stability and career advancement.

Through her participation in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program, Cassie enrolled in the Vital Phlebotomy Institute, LLC Training Program. With focus and discipline, she successfully completed the program and earned her credential as a National Certified Phlebotomy Technician.

Cassie distinguished herself as a dedicated and high-performing student, earning exemplary scores on all assessments and excelling in both classroom and clinical components. Her commitment to learning and personal development was evident throughout the training process.

Now fully certified, Cassie is actively pursuing full-time employment in the healthcare sector. She is committed to contributing to her community through quality patient care while continuing to build her professional skills and credentials.

Cassie's success reflects not only her personal strength and perseverance, but also the positive impact of workforce development programs that provide individuals with the resources and support needed to

overcome barriers and achieve meaningful employment. Her journey stands as a compelling example of how strategic investment in young adults can lead to long-term personal and economic success.

Rappahannock Community College Youth Success Story – Northern Neck

Smitty began his journey with Rappahannock Community College (RCC) in April 2024, just one month before his high school graduation. With a strong interest in diesel technology, he planned to enroll in the Diesel Technology program at Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) that fall.

Upon turning 18 and graduating from high school in May 2024, Smitty applied for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program and was enrolled in July. A collaborative funding plan was established, with SVCC providing G3 tuition assistance and WIOA covering his lodging expenses.

Smitty commenced his diesel technology training on September 30, 2024. Throughout the program, he demonstrated dedication and strong performance, successfully completing the training on March 20, 2025, and earning multiple industry-recognized credentials.

To gain practical work experience, Smitty was placed in a work experience assignment with a local county's school bus garage. Upon successful completion of his contract, he was hired full-time by another county to continue working in their school bus maintenance facility.

Smitty is thriving in his new role and enjoying the opportunity to apply his skills in a meaningful way. We congratulate Smitty on his achievements and wish him continued success in his career.

Rappahannock Community College Youth Success Story – Middle Peninsula

In April 2024, Frank approached Rappahannock Community College seeking training opportunities in CompTIA certifications. Having earned his bachelor's degree in cybersecurity in December 2023, Frank was actively seeking employment but found that many employers required additional industry certifications alongside a degree.

Frank applied to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program and met the eligibility criteria. In May 2024, he enrolled in the CompTIA Network+ training course, followed by CompTIA Security+ in June 2024. Demonstrating dedication and aptitude, Frank successfully earned certifications in both courses by September 2024.

In October, Frank began a work experience placement with RCC's IT Department, gaining valuable hands-on experience that enhanced his professional profile. Due to his strong performance, RCC requested an extension of his work experience contract, which was extended through December 2024.

Frank's hard work and commitment have paid off. He has accepted a position at a military base in Virginia and will begin employment upon completion of necessary government clearances.

We congratulate Frank on his achievements and wish him the very best as he embarks on his professional career.

Eastern Shore Community College Youth Success Stories – Eastern Shore

Rachel, an out-of-school youth participant, was referred to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program through a partnership with the Virginia Department for Aging and

Rehabilitative Services (DARS). With determination and a clear vision for her future, Rachel pursued a degree in Early Childhood Education at Eastern Shore Community College and proudly graduated in May.

Shortly after graduation, Rachel secured employment as a camp counselor at Camp Occohannock on the Bay, where she is currently serving as a preschool group leader for the summer. Her commitment to working with young children and building a meaningful career in education is evident in her enthusiasm and work ethic.

This fall, Rachel will take the next step in her professional journey as she transitions into a full-time role as a preschool teacher at Shore Christian Academy. Her accomplishments reflect her dedication, resilience, and passion for early childhood education.

Rachel's success is a testament to the impact of collaborative support systems and the WIOA Youth Program's role in helping young adults achieve their academic and career goals. We commend Rachel for her achievements and look forward to seeing the positive impact she will make in the lives of the children and families she serves.

Congratulations, Rachel—we are proud of you and wish you continued success as you pursue your dream of becoming an educator.