

Establishing an Education Foundation A Case Study: Patrick County Education Foundation

Conceptual and Initial Planning Phase

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Patrick County leadership became increasingly alarmed by the negative economic shifts due to the loss of manufacturing jobs in the Timber, Textiles, and Tobacco (3 T's) industries. Unemployment rates reached unprecedented heights and Patrick County needed a strategy for rebuilding the local economy. The leadership recognized that education attainment levels were extremely low and greatly lagged those of the Commonwealth and the Nation. They all agreed that a “new economy” in Patrick County required an investment in their human capital – more education and skills training for their residents.

Former Virginia Governor and Patrick County native Gerald L. Baliles and other key business, civic, education, community and government leaders convened to discuss the educational needs and attainment gaps that plagued the County and to define an economic development strategy that addressed those challenges. The group of Patrick County leaders included members of the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator, Superintendent of the School Board, Assistant County Administrator for Economic and Community Development, representatives from the County Industrial Development Authority as well as various community leaders and selected influential natives of Patrick County who have roots and family ties in the Patrick County community. The Patrick County Education Foundation (referred to as the Foundation for the remainder of this document) was established with a defined mission, goals and board of directors as a result of a number of both formal and informal discussions about education and economic “renewal” among the Patrick County leaders and community.

The Board of Directors was established and the membership included the former governor, presidents of public and private companies, current and former school superintendents, leadership within the courts, attorney general's office, NAACP, economic development agency, county administrator's office and county board of supervisors, Patrick County alumni, civic, business, education and government communities. The officers of the Board are:

- The Honorable Gerald L. Baliles, Partner, Hunton & Williams Law Firm, *Chairman**
- Dr. Stewart D. Roberson, Superintendent of Schools, Hanover County, *Vice Chairman**
- Dr. Richard C. Cole, Founder of Patrick County Family Practice, *Secretary*
- Mr. Joseph H. Vipperman, Retired Exec. VP for American Electric Power Co.,
*Treasurer**

An Executive Committee was also formed that included the Board officers with an asterisk by their name listed above. By-Laws for the Foundation were established that defined the Foundation's operations and governance as well as terms of service for the Board members. After the initial establishment of the Board the following rotating schedule of appointments and terms were defined:

- Local Patrick County government officials were nominated for appointment after the 1st year to serve a three-year term;

- Patrick County Alumni were nominated for appointment after the 2nd year to serve a three-year term; and
- Prominent Patrick County business and community leadership were nominated for appointment after the 3rd year to serve a three-year term.

The mission was to form a nonprofit, 501(c)(3), organization and economic development initiative to **increase the County's educational attainment levels to rank among the top five rural counties in Virginia and attract businesses to locate in the local area by 2011**. The goals defined in order to achieve the mission are as follows:

- Increase the percentage of high school graduates who attend college,
- Reduce by half the number of adults without a high school diploma, and
- Enhance the workforce skills and employment opportunities of the adults.

Ultimately, this initiative will provide the training, support and leadership necessary to change lives and create an economic future for Patrick County residents by 2011.

Securing funding for a startup foundation is essential. It was estimated that approximately \$80,000 was needed for the first year and an overall budget of seven to 10 million dollars would be needed to meet the goals outlined above over the ten year period. The Foundation's Board Chairmen secured \$600,000 in multi-year pledges of support at the beginning of the Foundation planning from various corporate funding foundations with interest in the county's future. The County approved an emergency fund totaling \$30,000 that the Foundation could utilize if necessary.

An underlying premise for the Foundation's strategy and mission was that the education attainment levels would increase the County's ability to attract future business. Program planning began in order to identify and define appropriate program initiatives for Patrick County and to meet the Foundation's goal to increase the education attainment of the county residents – both young and old. Three programs were defined to meet the challenge:

- College Access Program – modeled after the Hampton Roads initiative to encourage high school graduates to pursue a postsecondary education,
- GED Promotion Program – to encourage adults over the age of 21 without a high school diploma to obtain a GED and pursue further education, and
- Workforce Training Program – to provide advanced skills training to prepare the workforce for meeting current and potential employers' needs.

Goals

- Rebuild a strong local economy in Patrick County
- Establish a foundation and define a strategy of effective programming to address the workforce and educational challenges in the county.
- Change the culture of Patrick County by improving education attainment levels and advancing the workforce skills of its residents

Partners

Leadership and people of influence from the following groups:

- County Public School System
- County Administration and Local Government Agencies
- Local Private and Public Industry
- County Civic Organizations
- County Community Organizations

Observations and Lessons Learned

- Education attainment goals should be tied to economic development strategies.
- Develop a realistic operational budget necessary for meeting your goals. Fundraising efforts will be driven by the defined budget.
- The goals of the Foundation should be clear. Avoid “mission creep”. The Foundation can not be everything to everyone.
- The Foundation’s funding can not be the resource for making up for county funding shortfalls, keeping county property taxes low or replacing taxpayer’s responsibility.

Process (*generic process for other counties to follow*)

1. Examine/Assess the economic, workforce, and educational needs within your county/local community.
2. Convene a powerful group of business, civic, education, and government leaders in the community to discuss the findings and determine a plan of action.
 - a. Communicate specific issues to be address;
 - b. Develop a strategy for addressing the issues and needs (i.e. Patrick County defined 3 program initiatives that would address the needs and achieve the goals).
 - c. Establish a nonprofit foundation and define its mission (based on where you are and where you want to be in five, 10 or 15+ years);
 - d. Set goals for achieving the mission;
 - e. Establish a Board of Directors, appoint key leadership and alumni of the community as officers and executive committee members
 - f. Develop strategies for fundraising
3. Apply for corporate charter.
4. Establish a set of By laws for governance of the organization.
5. Solicit community, businesses, government agencies (local and federal) and foundations for contributions and funding necessary for startup and ongoing operations.
6. Seek legal and financial guidance for establishing a nonprofit and applying for 501(c)(3) status.

Startup Phase

During the startup phase, the Foundation's Board Chairmen initiated the process of securing funding for programming and staffing while processing the application for nonprofit status for the Foundation. Immediate staffing needs and a phased approach for launching the three program initiatives were defined.

Jerry Cooper, Retired Director of the Hampton Roads College Access Program, was hired as Interim Executive Director and assisted in the Foundation startup and program planning. The Patrick County School Board's service providers from the Adult Education Department, the director of Career and Vocational Technology and representatives from Patrick Henry Community College participated in the initial program planning. They identified resources and programs that would meet the goals of the Foundation.

During Cooper's tenure, the Foundation received its 501(c)(3) status in May 2001 and launched the The College Access Program in the Patrick County High School in October 2001. Sandra Dales was hired as the College Access Program Director. She was a former staff member Tidewater Scholarship Foundation, a private foundation in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia that assisted young people in entering college. Programmatic planning for the Foundation's initiatives to address education needs of adults and workforce skills enhancement continued while Cooper was the Interim Executive Director.

In August 2002, the Foundation board hired Gerald Hughes as the Executive Director. In September 2002, the Foundation's GED Promotion Project was formally announced followed by a marketing campaign that included financial aid and incentives to encourage the community to take advantage of the GED program. The first GED class following the campaign that enrolled and graduated Patrick County adults eligible for the GED program incentives began in spring 2003.

In November 2002, the Foundation brought together public and private industry employers to assist in the planning of the workforce readiness training series of programs. Based on the feedback from the employers, the first workforce training program should be a basic computer skills course. In order to address the computer skills gap within the Patrick County workforce, the Foundation in partnership with the Patrick Henry Community College offered a *TekAdvantage* course (a customized subset of *TekExam* that was developed by the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges) in June 2003.

Just as important as identifying and developing programs, the Foundation staff and executive committee members understood the importance of defining an evaluation strategy to measure the outcomes and progress towards meeting the goals. The evaluation strategy had to be goals-driven and a tool to provide the necessary feedback for the Foundation to adjust any of the program strategies as well as a means for reporting progress to current and future supporters. The Foundation staff and members of the executive committee had a two-day strategic planning session. They brought in consultants from the Virginia Business Higher Education Center to help with defining what statistical data and measures were available for tracking progress of the Foundation's efforts.

The Foundation had all of the initial program initiatives implemented by 2003 – the first two years of operation. The startup efforts were very successful. More details about each of the programs are provided in the programs section of this document.

Goals

- Raise funding for launching programs and securing support staff;
- Establish nonprofit status to legally operate a 501(c)(3) organization;
- Hire support staff (i.e. executive director, program director, consultants, etc.); and
- Launch program initiatives in a phased approach:
 1. A college access program at Patrick County High School that would encourage and assist high school students and parents with college planning and preparation;
 2. A GED Promotion Project with incentives to encourage adults to further their education; and
 3. Components of the Workforce Training Program series.
- Define an evaluation approach for setting a baseline, tracking progress and providing feedback for adjusting methods in order to meet the Foundation's goals,

Partners

Patrick County School System (particularly the Adult Education and Career and Vocational Technology staff)

Patrick County Government

Patrick Henry Community College

Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission

U.S. Department of Labor

Local Private and Public Industry

Legal Requirements

There are legal requirements particularly in establishing a 501(c)(3), and managing financial records that require the following expertise:

- Certified Public Accountant – conduct annual audits of financial bookkeeping
- Attorney (Corporate Law)

Evaluation Plan

The Foundation had to determine a definition of rural counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia. They adopted the U.S. Department of Commerce definition for “non-urban” counties based on population per square mile. There were 45 counties in the Commonwealth that the Foundation uses as comparison counties. The Foundation defined three benchmarks to measure their progress – one for each goal.

- College Access Benchmark – measure number of students who “plans to attend college” as well as the number that attends and completes college
- GED Benchmark – utilize the Virginia Department of Education's report on the total number GED graduates each year

- Workforce Benchmark – set a goal of training 1500 adults over the ten year period

The Foundation maintains the evaluation benchmarks quarterly in order to make necessary adjustments throughout the program year.

Observations and Lessons Learned

- You **must** partner with the leadership of existing education systems. They are your best resource for understanding the history of various education programs as well as the overall environment, opportunities and challenges that exists in your local education arena. They are also your best supporter/sponsor for developing and carrying out your initiatives.
- Your efforts **should** complement or enhance existing local education efforts.
- You must communicate your needs to the service providers in order to meet your goals.
- Be aware of “turf” issues that may arise when initiating education initiatives. Creating an environment of cooperation rather than one of competition is vital to the success of accomplishing your foundation’s mission.
- A good working relationship with local service providers and money for funding expanded programming can overcome the potential resistance to change.
- Carryout initiatives according to the planned timeline. Don’t wait for a “better” or more convenient time to launch your programs because typically there are unforeseen events that can happen. In the case of Patrick County Education Foundation, the launching of the College Access Program was scheduled to immediately following the “9-11” event and there was some apprehension concerning the ability to secure “promised” financial support. The program launched as planned and it was successful.
- Flexible scheduling is necessary for accommodating busy schedules of adult learners. It is recommended to have both day and evening sections of a course available for enrollment.

Process

1. Secure funding for staffing and phase I of program startup
2. Establish nonprofit status to legally operate as a 501(c)3
3. Hire staffing necessary to plan and implement first phase of programming and maintain records necessary for maintaining nonprofit status (Executive Director and Program Director are key positions necessary)
4. Determine the type of education programs needed to address the needs of the county/region based on the county/region education attainment, economic measures, workforce profile as well as local workforce and economic development goals
5. Team with appropriate board members, leadership for local department of education, postsecondary institutions, adult education providers, businesses, community-based organizations and high school faculty and staff to develop program plans and define program implementation plans for the implementation of selected programs
6. Define a set of goals for each of selected programs
7. Based on selected programs, define funding and additional staffing needs for daily operations, program planning and implementation
8. Carryout fundraising plan.

9. Launch programs in phased approach
10. Define program evaluation plan
11. Hire more staff as necessary to meet foundation objectives

Programs

College Access Program (PC-CAP) – Launched October 2001

The Patrick County College Access program was the first of the three programs launched by the Foundation. The program began in the fall of 2001 during an uncertain and difficult time in history for the United States since it was preceded in the previous month by the “9-11” events. Jerry Baliles (the Foundation Board Chairman), Jerry Cooper (retired Director, Tidewater Access Program that started in 1987) and leadership from the Patrick County High School developed the PC-CAP plan with the support and guidance of the National College Access Network (NCAN) – of which the Foundation is a member. The Foundation utilized the generous unrestricted startup funding from donors and leveraged office space provided by the Patrick County High School to implement PC-CAP in the high school to address the issue of increasing the number of high school graduates who pursue postsecondary education.

The PC-CAP planning team selected a College Access Program Manager, Sandra Dales who was a former graduate and later served as staff of the Tidewater Access Program, to assist high school students and their families with college admissions and financial aid. After joining the Foundation as the PC-CAP Program Director, Dales initially worked part-time on programmatic planning and part-time on advising at the high school. As an advisor in the high school, Dales worked one-on-one with students and parents and identified existing federal, state, college and other sources of college funding for the students and assisted with FAFSA applications and SAT registration. Additionally, the PC-CAP program offers Last-Dollar awards to high school graduates who enroll in college and have unmet financial need and pays SAT fees for low-income students.

The Foundation had overwhelming support from the high school staff and faculty who embraced PC-CAP within the high school. Other supporters included the Patrick County government who agreed to provide emergency funding for the program if needed; the Clark Gas and Oil Company who provided funding for the ninth grade college tour; and the PC Retired Teachers Association who “got the word out” in the Patrick community about PC-CAP and its benefits. When the program began, there were no ceremonial or ribbon-cutting activities to launch the program in the high school. However, today the PC-CAP staff is introduced during the high school faculty and student orientations. The college access staff makes class presentations and the students are encouraged to make appointments for one-on-one visits to address their college planning needs.

PC-CAP has been very effective in increasing the number of students taking SATs, applying and enrolling in college and is incrementally moving towards its 10-year goal. Within the first year of operation, the PC-CAP advisor encouraged the high school upperclassmen to enroll in PC-CAP and complete a “*Challenge Agreement*” that required them to maintain a C+ average and attend school at least 90 percent of the time, refrain from drugs and alcohol and participate in activities sponsored by

the PC-CAP. If students successfully met all the criteria of the Agreement, the Foundation agreed to help them find necessary financial resources to attend college.

As a result of the college access program in the first year, the percentage of students taking the SAT doubled and over \$475,000 (including \$17,000 in the Foundation's Last-Dollar Awards) in funding was secured in scholarships to fund students. The Class of 2002 had 45 percent of those attending college to go to a four-year college. More importantly, this program changed more students' perception of postsecondary education – the students were motivated about the hope of attending college and believed in their abilities to succeed in college.

In the second year of operation (2002 – 2003) of PC-CAP, 54 percent of the senior class took the SAT, which represented a 63 percent increase prior to program initiation. There was a 17 percent increase (62 percent) of graduating seniors attending four-year colleges. Overall there was 56 percent of the Class of 2003 who continued the education beyond high school. The Foundation provided \$37,000 in Last-Dollar Awards and an overall total of over \$585,000 in outside funding was secured for graduating seniors.

Additionally, in the second year of operation the Foundation began to create partnerships and broaden available resources for students. They increased college attendance opportunities by obtaining agreements with four private Virginia institutions to provide additional financial aid and scholarships to Patrick County graduates. The Foundation increased their interaction with students by encouraging ninth graders (in addition to the upperclassmen) to sign and submit challenge agreements. Finally, in the second year, the Foundation began the "*ScholarShop*" program that offered a resource-based curriculum for motivating and preparing students in grades 7 – 12 for postsecondary education.

The third year of operation (2003 – 2004) was a phenomenal year with several important milestones. The Foundation hired its first "full-time" in-school College Access Program Advisor available to serve more students at Patrick County High School four days a week during school hours. Previously the College Access Advisor for the Foundation provided both the function of PC-CAP Advisor and Foundation Program Director, thus preventing the allocation of more time for advising students and their families and offering special in-school events, parent programs and classroom presentations.

The launch of the Foundation's first annual ScholarShop summer class took place in the third year of operation in July 2003. The class offers 40 hours of resource-based curriculum for to motivate and prepare students in grades 9 – 12 for postsecondary education. The first class served 15 students in grades 10 – 11 for five hours per day for eight days.

Also in the third year of operation, 65 percent of the senior class took the SAT. The total financial aid secured for graduating seniors was \$984,774 including the Foundation's contribution of \$138,750 in Last Dollar Awards. The number of private colleges and universities that signed "Agreements" to provide scholarships to Patrick County High School graduates increased to nine during year three.

The fourth year of PC-CAP operation (2004 – 2005) brought state, regional and national recognition to the Foundation and marked a year of reflection and evaluation of all PC-CAP activities. It was clear that students' propensity for enrollment in postsecondary education develops in the early stages of their schooling. As a result of analyzing PC-CAP activities, two new components of the PC-CAP program (college awareness programming for students in grades 4 – 7 and peer-to-peer roundtable for high school students) were added to more aggressively influence students to attend college. The peer-to-peer roundtable allowed for PC-CAP alumni enrolled in college to discuss college life with current high school students. In addition, grant funds were secured for conducting an intensive 2-week summer SAT study program and a semester-long SAT credit course scheduled for the 2005-2006 school year.

During the fourth year of operation, 53 percent of the seniors (89 seniors) took the SAT. A total of \$602,633 in financial aid was secured for the graduating seniors pursuing postsecondary education, and \$75,000 in Last Dollar Awards was contributed by the Foundation.

As part of the PC-CAP evaluation process, the Foundation utilizes benchmarks in comparison with the 45 counties defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as non-metropolitan counties within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The benchmarks include data for high school graduates as percent of ninth grade membership and percent high school graduates with two-year and four-year college attendance plans. The benchmark comparisons will track Patrick County's progress in ranking among Virginia's top five rural counties in each of the measures. Other measures that the Foundation is using to evaluate the program include the following:

- Number and percentage of Patrick County high school graduates attending college
- Number and percentage of Patrick County students taking the SAT
- Total number of college applications submitted per graduating class
- Total number of FAFSA forms filed by the graduating class
- Total financial support reported as received by the high school graduating class
- Number of PC-CAP members
- Number and percentage of PC-CAP Challenge Agreements submitted for each grade level

The overall performance of the PC-CAP program since its inception in October 2001 includes the following cumulative totals:

- The financial aid received by Patrick County High School graduates more than doubled each year of the Foundation's establishment totaling \$2,639,603
- 92 Last Dollar Awards totaling \$345,000
- The percentage of graduating seniors taking the SAT has increased significantly (at least 56 with a maximum of 91 percent increase in each year since 2001)
- A substantial increase in the percentage of graduating seniors attending four-year colleges (approximately 17 percent increase per year)

Goals

- Increase the number of Patrick County High School graduates that attend college in order to be in the top five rural Virginia counties with its students going to college by 2011

- Launch college access program to serve Patrick County students and their families in planning, preparing and applying to college
- Remove financial barriers to pursuing postsecondary education for Patrick County High School graduating seniors

Partners

Averett University
Bridgewater College
Clark Gas and Oil Company
Ferrum College
Hampden-Sydney College
Hollins University
Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
National College Access Network (NCAN)
Patrick County Public School System
Patrick County Retired Teachers Association
Roanoke College
Shenandoah University
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)
University of Richmond
University of Virginia
Virginia Intermont College

Observations and Lessons Learned

- There are differences between a rural college access program and an urban one – ranging from the wording of the challenge agreement to the determination and general attitude of the targeted population. Urban programs typically look for students who show significant promise, but need quite a bit of support to transition into college (endangered cream-of-the-crop). Rural programs typically target all high school students to provide college awareness and encourage college attendance as a viable option.
- College access programs in rural settings tend to have to focus more on building the desire for students to go to college. The mindset of students varies from viewing college as not necessary for a successful future (factories were a way of life and part of the culture and parents feel that is good enough for the children’s futures) to college is not an option because “my mom & dad already said they couldn’t afford it.”
- There was a general “distrust” of contracts – students and parents feared signing challenge agreements and resisted because they were not sure (lack of knowledge) what they were signing up for.
- Parents had an unrealistic understanding of college costs – they believed that it costs \$35,000 or more (costs of many Ivy League schools) per year to attend college.
- Parents lacked a basic of awareness of financial aid and their ability to apply for and receive it.

- Early awareness for both the parents and children is the key to success of a rural college access program. Start an early awareness program as soon as possible in the program launching process – initiate at the time of startup if possible.
- Having a full time college access advisor is necessary to have the full impact was confirmed during the process. The sooner you can have full time advisor in the high school the greater the impact.

Process

1. Seek information about existing college access programs in order to understand the types of program activities, materials, and necessary support required for a successful program. NCAN is an excellent resource.
2. Establish a College Access Planning Team:
 - a. Invite the Foundation staff (or other experts on college access in rural settings) to assist in the college access program planning
 - b. Establish a relationship with leadership at local school system and invite them to take part in the college access program planning. The local school system is a key partner in a successful program
 - c. Invite leadership from postsecondary education community to be on the planning team
 - d. Invite members of local well-respected and effective educational organizations to be on the planning team
 - e. Invite members of the business community to assist with planning and program implementation
3. Develop the College Access Program plan
 - a. Collect background information on local college going rates, SAT statistics and financial aid data
 - b. Define activities (outreach at elementary and secondary school levels) and implementation plan
 - c. Determine the role that the each organization represented on the planning team will play
 - d. Define measurable college access goals
 - e. Develop an evaluation plan
 - f. Determine launch date for the program
4. Hire staff to run the college access program. A full time college access advisor and an assistant are recommended
5. Launch the program (Based on amount of funding, launching may require a phased implementation approach – in that case launching program in the high schools is first priority. Implement early awareness program in elementary and middle schools as soon as possible.)
 - a. Conduct a program awareness campaign for both “in-school” and “out-of-school” communities
 - b. Enlist students to participate and sign the challenge agreement
 - c. Carryout program planning (special college awareness programs, identification of financial aid, SAT prep courses, college tours etc.)

- d. Conduct one-on-one college planning appointments with students and their parents
6. Establish relationships with postsecondary institutions to provide scholarships for high school graduates from the local community
7. Collect necessary data for program evaluation and make adjustments based on the program data and participant feedback.
8. Continue fundraising efforts to sustain the college access program activities

GED Promotion Project – Launched Spring 2003

Approximately 38 percent of Patrick County residents age 25 and older did not have a high school diploma. Adult education services had been available in Patrick County for many years, however participation was low, and there was little funding to promote the services. Foundation leaders realized the importance of significantly increasing the percentage of adults with a high school diploma or equivalency and with the use of unrestricted startup funds and support from the Virginia Tobacco Commission, launched its GED Promotion Project in the spring of 2003. In August 2002, Foundation staff (Jerry Hughes and Sandra Dales) along with the Patrick County Public Schools Division of Adult Education staff and the Foundation's Program Review Committee (Stewart Roberson, Chair; Judy Lacks, Patrick County Superintendent of Patrick County Public School; Geraldine House, President and CEO Institute for Student Achievement; and Rickie Fulcher, Patrick County School Board member) began developing the GED promotion program plan to aggressively market and promote the GED and External Diploma Project preparation and testing services available to Patrick County residents.

The Foundation collaborated with several organizations in the Patrick County community including Patrick County Public School's Division of Adult Education, the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, the Patrick County Retired Teachers Association, The Patrick County Ministerial Association and the Stuart Rotary Club to target county residents and promote GED enrollment and successful completion of high school credentials. As a key campaign strategy for the GED Promotion Project, the Foundation offers GED and External Diploma graduate incentive vouchers of \$1000 which can be applied to job training and approved further education costs or used to pay county taxes. The program campaign methods consists of advertisements in local newspaper and radio stations, direct mail and grassroots marketing efforts of two trusted natives of the county who work as part-time recruiters for the program. The campaign began with a local newspaper story about the GED Promotion Project that provided details such as an overview of the program, information about organizations involved and an outline of program incentives and anticipated outcomes. The story was followed up by radio and newspaper advertisements that promoted the GED completion incentives and the services that provided a nurturing and supportive environment for returning adult learners. A direct mailing campaign started in spring 2004.

Also as part of the GED Promotion Project, the Foundation understood that there must be adequate resources available for providing the services promoted in the campaign. Therefore they supplemented the salaries for a full-time GED coordinator and more classroom instructors and purchased additional textbooks to ensure they had the capacity to meet the increased demand for GED courses. Starting in 2005, the Foundation started promoting a GED Mentoring program which provides \$250 as compensation to recent GED graduates (program alumni) to recruit and

mentor students throughout the GED process to completion of GED. The GED mentor receives the \$250 upon the graduation of their student “mentee”.

The first GED class following the launch of the promotional campaign enrolled 101 Patrick County residents without a high school diploma. Year two and three enrollments increased to 141 and 143 respectively. There were 19 GED graduates in the first year followed by 30 GED graduates in year two and 48 graduates in year three. Over the three year period, there were 97 graduates thus \$97,000 in incentive vouchers were funded by the Foundation.

As part of the GED Promotion evaluation process, the Foundation is utilizing the “GEDs Awarded per 1000 Residents” benchmark in comparison with the 45 counties defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as non-metropolitan counties within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Based on 2004-05 estimated benchmark projections, Patrick County’s ranking moved from 43rd prior to program launch to second. The program outcomes are getting local, state, regional and national recognition. The local media coverage provides additional publicity for the GED Promotion Project which aids the Foundation in reaching more adults and meeting its GED and External Diploma goals. In addition, nearby counties are interested in replicating the \$1000 graduate incentive as part of promoting GED completion in their communities.

Goals

- Reduce by 50 percent the number of Patrick County residents without a high school diploma or GED such that it will be in the top five rural Virginia counties for possessing high school education by 2011
- Double the annual enrollments each year in the GED promotion program in order to get enrollment above 200 students
- Increase the percentage of GED recipients who pursue further training and postsecondary education

Partners

Patrick County Public School’s Adult Education Department
Patrick County Chamber of Commerce
Patrick County Ministerial Association
Patrick County Retired Teachers Association
Stuart Rotary Club
Virginia Department of Education
West Piedmont Workforce Investment Area (Region 17)

Observations and Lessons Learned

- Many of the residents without a high school diploma did not own their home or land. Therefore, the GED promotion incentive to pay real estate property county taxes had to be changed to pay all (personal property and real estate) county taxes.
- Achieving a GED for many adults is very personal and private

- Doubling enrollment each year may not be realistic – The effects (reductions) on GED enrollments due to the expiration of the federal trade act and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) were not considered when goals were being set. The federal Trade Act provides benefits for workers who lose their job due to foreign trade and NAFTA provides assistance to workers impacted by imports and shifts in production to either Mexico or Canada. Both the federal trade act and NAFTA require residents to be in an approved education program such as GED
- Eligibility for the federal Trade Act funding required students to fulfill a significant number of course hours that the Adult Education courses did not meet.
- For evaluation, “GEDs Awarded per 1000 Residents” measures or workable alternatives have to be used for monitoring progress because education attainment data is only updated for the 10-year census – this was not considered at the time program planning
- Define goals (both overall and annual) differently taking into account Trade Act impact and per capita benchmarking;

Process

1. Establish a planning team for GED Promotion
 - Partner with leadership from local education organization that provides adult education (both K-12 and postsecondary)
 - Partner with community leaders and organizations with a shared vision and are influential in the community
 - Include a committee of Board members
2. Determine target audience
 - Understand the barriers that prevents target audience from returning to complete high school equivalency or GED
 - Identify motivators and best ways to influence the target audience
 - Define benefits of more education from the target audience viewpoint
3. Develop strategies that minimize barriers and maximize benefits
 - Define innovative marketing incentives (i.e. grants to pay taxes or continue education)
4. Define marketing plan
 - Develop the marketing themes and messages
 - Identify the best media channels for reaching your target audience
 - Develop a public relations strategy
 - Create a buzz in the community about your organization and the program incentives (i.e. story in local newspaper describing your organization and it’s vision and mission)
 - Use partners and their resources
 - Use alumni of the program to promote the program and serve as mentors
5. Ensure that you have the resources and capacity to serve the adults seeking GED and further postsecondary training
6. Strategically launch the marketing advertisements (i.e. try to get press coverage, use different media channels and market at key times – based on course offering schedules throughout the year
7. Collect the necessary data for tracking progress and benchmarking

Workforce Training Program – Launched 1st program initiative June 2003

The Workforce Training Program is the third program of the Foundation's three-prong approach for rebuilding Patrick County's local economy. This program focuses on improving the workforce skills for Patrick County residents. The planning team including Foundation staff (Jerry Hughes and Sandra Dales) the Patrick County Public School Division of Adult and Vocational Technology Education staff and leadership from the Stuart site of the Patrick Henry Community College convened a group of local business CEOs for a breakfast meeting to discuss the key employee skills needed to satisfy their workforce demands. The CEOs agreed that the new hires lacked computer skills and suggested that the Foundation offer *TekExam* courses that were developed by the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges. *TekExam* was a computer skills certification program developed initially for graduates of small liberal arts colleges in Virginia. After a successful pilot in Virginia, the *TekExam* program was offered nationally.

Based on comments from the business leaders, the Foundation partnered Patrick Henry Community College staff to develop a 4-week *TekAdvantage* course (customized subset of Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges' *TekExam*) that certifies students in basic computer use and applications. The Foundation utilized funding from the Virginia Tobacco Commission and United States Department of Labor and unrestricted startup funds and launched the Workforce Training Program at Patrick Henry Community College in June 2003. They announced the first training course to the community by placing an ad in the local newspaper about the computer course. Patrick Henry Community College managed the course registration and provided the *TekAdvantage* course. Patrick County government provided the use of the building (located on the community college's campus) for the course at no cost and Patrick Henry Community College provided access to the computer labs.

The *TekAdvantage* courses have been a success. In 2003-2004 (first year of program), seven courses had been offered and 161 students were certified. In the second year of the program, in addition to *TekAdvantage*, Patrick Henry Community College developed and provided the Foundation's second workforce training initiative, *Career Readiness Certificate Program* – an integrated course of ACT Work Keys with training in career exploration and job-seeking strategies and appropriate workplace behaviors. The Foundation was selected to do the pilot for Virginia's Career Readiness program, so the only courses in the state were offered at Patrick Henry Community College initially. Also the Foundation partnered with Team Nurse Inc., and offered Personal Care Assistants (PCA) training courses. Accomplishments for that year included eight *TekAdvantage* courses with 157 students certified, six *Career Readiness Certificate Program* courses with 72 students certified, and one PCA training courses with students certified. Finally in that year, the Foundation kicked off the "Education Example" project in which all 21 of the County and Town of Stuart's elected officials agreed to participate in one educational course in 2005. The "Education Example" project demonstrates the County's commitment to education and lifelong learning.

The Foundation is planning to provide advanced computer classes due to requests of the students. In addition, they are partnering with Reynolds Memorial and Patrick County Community Hospital and planning to offer Certified Nurses Assistant and Medical Terminology in January 2006.

The Foundation continues to work with Patrick Henry Community College, the Patrick County office of Economic Development and a group of local business owners to plan future Workforce Training Program initiatives. The Foundation understands the impact of this partnership for meeting the workforce training goals and more importantly for the County's economic development future. Also, the Foundation developed a database of resumes from students who successfully completed the workforce training program. They use the resumes in their marketing materials to highlight the skills of their residents and encourage prospective businesses to move to the area.

The Workforce Training Program has been a success. For evaluation purposes, the Foundation is tracking number of adults trained and the impact the training has had on their personal income and employment opportunities.

Goals

- Train 1500 students by 2011
- Establish effective partnerships with the county to develop workforce opportunities
- Promote Patrick County college graduates returning to Patrick County as teachers

Partners

Eastern Imaging
Group of CEOs of local businesses
Patrick County Public School Division of Adult Education
Patrick County Community Hospital
Patrick County Office of Economic Development
Patrick Henry Community College (Stuart site)
Smith River Community Bank
Reynolds Memorial Hospital
Team Nurse Inc.
U.S. Department of Labor
Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges
Virginia Tobacco Commission

Observations and Lessons Learned

- A strong demand for the workforce training programs in Patrick County already existed – no promotion was necessary.
- Free courses are a great model for removing financial barriers for adults to pursue more education and training.
- Resume development is an integral part of the courses and can be available for new businesses looking to move to the county.
- It is best to conduct intake and follow-up student surveys in the class because access to student information after the course is completed can become an issue.

- Students should be informed that they will have to provide demographic information as part of a later follow-up survey with the commitment that there will be guaranteed anonymity and results will be reported as part of an aggregate set of information.

Process

1. Establish a Workforce Training planning team
 - Partner with the local adult education, workforce and economic development agencies and chamber of commerce
 - Partner with local colleges and education organizations
2. Determine what workforce skills are needed (workforce skills gaps) in your local community
 - Convene leadership of local businesses to aid in defining workforce needs
3. Develop a plan for addressing the workforce skills gaps
 - Identify training courses needed to address the workforce skills gaps
 - Partner with local businesses, colleges and education organizations to develop and provide the training services
 - Define the training implementation plan (start dates, length of course, course logistics, facilities etc.)
 - Develop and/or obtain the training materials
 - Define course evaluation plan (intake and follow-up surveys)
4. Provide the training course(s)
 - Advertise the training course(s) in the community
 - Enroll students
 - Train students
5. Conduct follow-up student surveys
6. Continue to network with workforce and economic development agencies, chamber of commerce, local businesses, colleges and education organizations to define other workforce training initiatives needed in the community
7. Continue fundraising efforts to sustain the workforce training program activities

The Foundation Milestone Timeline (from inception)

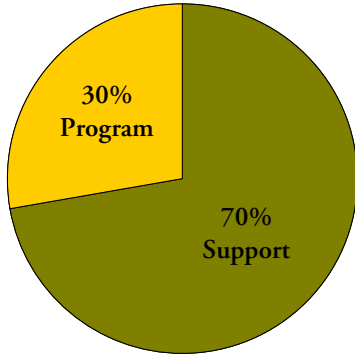
The Foundation is monitoring the program outcomes quarterly and continually enhancing and modifying each of the programs to meet the goals. They are achieving their goals and fundraising is ongoing. Below are some highlights of the Foundation's activities from inception to June 2005.

Timeline	Milestones
Fall 2000	A group of Patrick County leaders convened to discuss economic development strategies which led to the establishment of the Patrick County Education Foundation (the Foundation).
Winter 2001	The Foundation hired Jerry Cooper as Interim Executive Director.
May 2001	The Foundation received 501(c)(3) status.
June 2001	The Foundation secured funding to begin programmatic activities.
Fiscal Year 2002	
October 2001	Hired Sandra Dales as the Foundation's College Access Program Manager College Access Program Launched in Patrick County High School
June 2002	College Access Program helped high school seniors obtain over \$450,000 in financial assistance, awarded \$17,000 in "last dollar" scholarships, doubled the number of students registering for PSAT, and secured \$50,000 in scholarships from Ferrum College.
Fiscal Year 2003	
August 2002	The Foundation hired Jerry Hughes as Executive Director.
April 2003	The GED Promotion Project was launched.
June 2003	The Workforce Training Program launched its first program initiative (4-week <i>TekAdvantage</i>) at Patrick Henry Community College. There was a 63 percent increase in number of Patrick County seniors who took the SAT; a 17 percent increase in graduating seniors attending four-year colleges; and 56 percent of the graduating class of 2003 enrolled in postsecondary education. The Foundation provided \$37,000 in Last-Dollar Awards. The Foundation secured an overall total of more than \$585,000 in outside funding. Four colleges and universities had partnered with the Foundation to provide supplemental scholarships to Patrick County High School graduates.
Fiscal Year 2004	
July 2003	The Foundation had its first graduation for <i>TekAdvantage</i> course.

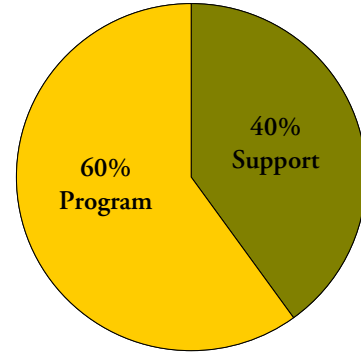
Timeline	Milestones
	The Foundation launched an extensive GED media campaign.
August 2003	GED enrollment increased by 40 percent.
September 2003	The first GED incentives were awarded.
March 2004	Benchmark data are selected for the Foundation's three program initiatives.
April 2004	There were over 160 adults certified through <i>TekAdvantage</i> .
May 2004	The number GED graduates increased by 50 percent since the previous year.
June 2004	<p>Sixty-five percent of the senior class took the SAT; the total financial aid secured for the graduating seniors was over \$984,000; and The Foundation provided over \$138,000 in Last Dollar Awards with an overall total of \$258,750 since PC-CAP began.</p> <p>A total of nine colleges and universities had partnered with the Foundation to provide supplemental scholarships to Patrick County High School graduates.</p>
Fiscal Year 2005	
July 2004	<p>The Foundation Board adopts benchmark counties and guidelines.</p> <p>The first ScholarShop summer program serving 9th – 12th graders was launched.</p>
August 2004	A Finance Administrator and “full-time” in-school PC-CAP advisor were hired.
September 2004	The first <i>Annual Giving Campaign</i> was launched.
October 2004	Community Liaison for Adult Education was hired.
November 2004	The Foundation in partnership with Patrick Henry Community College launched its first <i>Career Readiness Certificate</i> instructional program.
December 2004	The Foundation received grants from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).
January 2005	The “Education Example” was launched – 21 elected officials make New Year’s Resolution to complete a college course during 2005.
February 2005	The PC-CAP initiated expanded SAT prep program at Patrick County High School.
March 2005	The first graduation for the <i>Career Readiness Certificate</i> was held.
June 2005	<p>There were 48 GED graduates from the GED Promotion Project.</p> <p>Fifty-three percent of the seniors took the SAT; over \$602,000 in financial aid was secured for graduating seniors; and \$75,000 in Last Dollar Awards were provided.</p>

Annual Expenditures and Programmatic vs. Administrative Cost

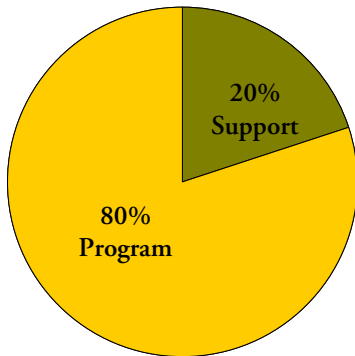
2002 Total Expenditures: \$78,882



2003 Total Expenditures: \$173,272



2004 Total Expenditures: \$349,400



2005 Total Expenditures: \$576,210

