

2026 COAA-VA Fall Workshop

Agenda	**Session Information**
8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration and Networking
9:00 – 9:30 am	Welcome and Introductions
9:30 – 10:30 am	**Think Apprenticeships are Complicated? Think Again …**

Hannah Donavan, Hopkins Lacy; Kara Joyce, Virginia Works; Robyn Tuck, Western VA Water Authority; Amanda Painter, Roanoke County Public Schools - Facilitator Paul O'Keef

Workforce shortages aren't going away … but building an apprenticeship program may be more achievable than you think.

This practical panel discussion brings together employers, workforce development professionals, educators, and an apprentice to demystify the process of creating and sustaining successful apprenticeship programs.

Representatives from Hopkins Lacy, Western Virginia Water Authority, Virginia Works, and Roanoke County Public Schools will share perspectives from across the apprenticeship pipeline. Employers will discuss why they turned to apprenticeships, how they got their programs started, what's working, and what they've learned along the way. Virginia Works will provide a broader look at the resources and support available to employers, while



RCPS will explore how CTE programs and local businesses can work together to create pathways that respond to changing workforce needs.

Attendees will hear directly from an apprentice about what the experience looks like from the other side of the table.

Whether you're an Owner struggling to fill critical positions, interested in developing talent from within, or simply wondering where to begin, this conversation is designed to replace some of the mystery surrounding apprenticeships with practical ideas and lessons you can take back to your organization.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify ways apprenticeship programs can help organizations address workforce gaps while creating structured pathways for developing new and existing employees.
2. Describe the basic steps and partnerships involved in establishing an apprenticeship program, including available workforce-development resources and support.
3. Compare apprenticeship approaches used by employers and educational partners and identify lessons learned that can inform development of a program within their own organization.
4. Explain how collaboration among employers, CTE programs, workforce agencies, and apprentices can create sustainable talent pipelines that respond to changing local workforce needs.



10:30 – 11:30 am **Workforce Gaps? Let's Talk Solutions**

Regina Cook, Virginia Western Community College

Discover how mentoring and reverse mentoring can transform your workplace into a dynamic, two-way learning environment where knowledge flows freely across roles, generations, and levels of experience. This session dives into the strategies, behaviors, and communication skills that make mentoring truly effective — not just as a professional development tool, but as a catalyst for inclusion, innovation, and organizational resilience. Participants will explore real world applications, practical frameworks, and conversation techniques they can use immediately to strengthen relationships, accelerate learning, and build a culture where everyone contributes, and everyone grows. Leave equipped to forge stronger connections, elevate emerging talent, empower seasoned leaders, and keep your organization plugged into what's next.

Key Takeaways

- Identify purposeful methodologies for information exchange and eliminate barriers that may exist for this success predicated on organizational culture.
- Learn to utilize intentional conversations as platforms for development.
- Use reverse mentoring for seasoned leaders to keep leaders current and aware.
- Distinguish the roles of the mentor, mentee, reverse mentor, and reverse mentee.
- Tie mentoring and reverse mentoring strategies and programming to real workplace needs.
- Examine tools to communicate value and ensure all team members have a seat at the table for the programming.



11:30 – 12:00 pm **G.I.R.L. (Girls in Real Life) Construction Experience**

Kim Sargent, Branch Builds

The construction industry cannot wait for schools, associations, or other companies to solve its workforce challenges. Building the next generation of talent requires companies to take an active, intentional role in introducing people to the industry and showing them where they belong.

In this session, Kim Sargent will share why Branch created the GIRL Construction Experience and how the company grew the event from a small career exploration gathering to an award-winning, (literally) ground-breaking event in just five years. She will discuss the importance of reaching girls and other untapped populations, building support across an organization, engaging industry and community partners, and creating an experience that families want to return to year after year.

More than the story of one successful event, this presentation is a call for construction companies to take ownership of workforce development. Attendees will leave with practical lessons they can apply within their own organizations, along with a challenge to step outside their traditional recruiting practices, work collaboratively, and invest in people who may not yet see a future for themselves in construction.

12:00 – 1:00 pm **LUNCH**



1:00 – 2:00 pm **Building the Future Workforce: Inside Roanoke County's New CTE Center**

Chris Phillips and Michael Mauceri, RRMM Architects; Cathy Underwood, Branch Builds; Chris Burns, Westwood

What does it take to create a facility designed to prepare the next generation for the workforce?

Hear directly from Roanoke County Public Schools, RRMM Architects, and Branch as they take attendees behind the scenes of the new Roanoke County Career & Technical Education Center—from the construction process and programming decisions to the partnerships and challenges that shaped the project.

The team will explore emerging trends in CTE and workforce development, how RCPS is working to keep its programs relevant to the needs of students and employers, the importance of business and community partnerships, and the Owner's experience using PPEA design-build delivery to bring the vision to life.

You'll hear the project from three distinct perspectives - builder, designer, and Owner - before stepping inside for a guided tour of the facility and a firsthand look at the spaces created to support the region's future workforce.



Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify key planning and programming considerations for career and technical education facilities that support evolving workforce and educational needs.

2. Explain how collaboration among Owners, designers, builders, educators, and the business community can inform facility programming and strengthen CTE workforce development.

3. Evaluate project challenges and Owner considerations that influenced the planning, design, and construction of the Roanoke County Career & Technical Education Center.

4. Describe how the PPEA design-build delivery approach was applied to the project and identify lessons that Owners can consider when evaluating delivery strategies for future capital projects.

2:00 – 2:15 pm	**Closing Remarks & Depart for Tour**
2:30 – 3:30 pm	**Tour RCCTC**
3:30 pm	**Networking Happy Hour**

Location: Branch Builds | 3635 Peters Creek Road, Roanoke, VA

Keep the conversation going! Following the CTE Center tour, join us at the Branch Builds office for refreshments, light appetizers, and informal networking with fellow attendees.