

Workforce Services: A Gateway to Vocation

Benjamin Marcus, staff writer

Cars going up College Drive to reach the main parking lot for PVCC all pass a building at the very bottom of the road. People who take the time to look at the building's parking lot might notice that it contains several tractor-trailers. This is the Workforce Services building, where many PVCC students have acquired the skills and certification to pursue careers in the Virginia workforce.

The programs offered by Workforce Services cover a wide range of professions. These range from health care, to engine repair, commercial driving, welding, plumbing, and agriculture.

There are courses in person — either at the Workforce Services building or different locations where students can get hands-on experience. There are also courses available online, with varying amounts of contact hours. Many of these courses will make a student eligible for professional certification after completion.

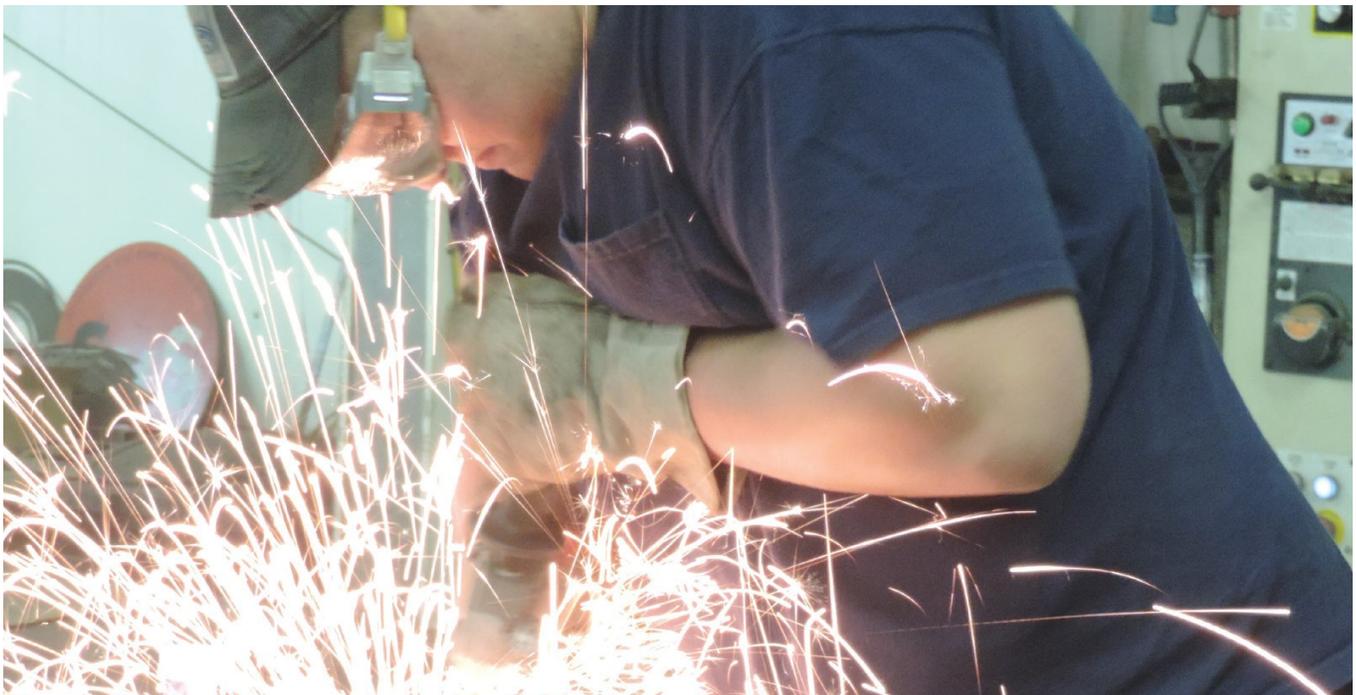
In addition, there are courses in more broadly applicable skills such as leadership, resume writing, and practical training in various languages that a student may encounter once they join the workforce.

One specific group of courses available are the FastForward programs, which Dean of Workforce Services, Christy Hawkins, says are “the heart and soul of Workforce Services.” These are short-term training programs that are designed to efficiently get students who have been living in Virginia for at least 12 months credentials in high-demand fields such as healthcare, transportation, and other skilled trades.

When taking a course as part of a FastForward program, a student is responsible for one-third of their tuition. The other two-thirds are covered by Virginia.

The first of these thirds is paid when the student completes the class. The second is paid when the student earns their credential. In addition to this, some students are eligible for the G3 program, which will pay for the final third, allowing students who are going into high-demand fields to get their training and credentials for free.

There are many other programs and courses offered through Workforce Services — a list of which can be found on their website at www.pvcc.edu/workforce/programs-courses-0 — all of them providing ways for PVCC students to get started on their paths to a career.



Promotional image featuring welding. Photo courtesy of Workforce Services