



BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES...





2017

The residents of Richmond recognize that continuing to tolerate a status quo, in which one in four residents and two in five children live in poverty, is unacceptable. The work of the Office of Community Wealth Building, in partnership with other stakeholders, offers a framework for not only conceptualizing, but executing systemic change for the benefit of all residents.

As the first office of its kind in the nation within municipal government to provide “wrap around” services and support for residents born into generations of disenfranchisement, we are strategically battling to change the trajectory of the lives of the people we serve so that they may thrive.

YOU make our work possible. Your input, your partnership, your sharing and your belief provide the fuel that propels us forward!

WE ALL WANT TO
LEAVE A LEGACY
BEHIND FOR THE
ONES WE LOVE. LIVE
FREE FROM
FINANCIAL BURDEN
AND BE ABLE TO
PROVIDE THE
NECESSITIES THAT
NURTURE A HEALTHY
AND SUCCESSFUL
HOME AND LIFESTYLE.



**THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY WEALTH
BUILDING IS CULTIVATING SUCCESSFUL
FUTURES ALONGSIDE MANY OF OUR
GREAT COMMUNITY LEADERS!**

Because Our Future Depends on it...

We are using a Two Generation approach to our work!

Our fundamental aim is policy and structural change: building a coherent ladder out of poverty through access to quality employment and related supports, bolstering the community and economic assets of low income neighborhoods, and creating stronger neighborhoods and educational opportunities to improve the life chances of Richmond's low income children.

We provide opportunities for families to move out of poverty and improve family economic security and child wellbeing, typically by supporting parental employment with family supporting wages and children's care and education.

We support parents in their dual roles of caregiver and provider and address the care and educational needs of their children.

In order to implement the vision...

We need to **CREATE** a system that makes it easier for everyone to build wealth.

We need to **FACILITATE** pathways to build wealth in order to change the way people live and create a hopeful future for their children.

We need to **CONSTRUCT** an economic environment where families have a living wage that provides the ability to earn, save and meet the unexpected challenges we all face in life.

YET

Be patient and have faith, remain steadfast in your goals and believe in your ability!

WE

The road we travel was not meant to be charted alone.

RISE

Everything is possible when your passion and drive is fueled by your need to turn your dreams into realities.



Vincent Lewis

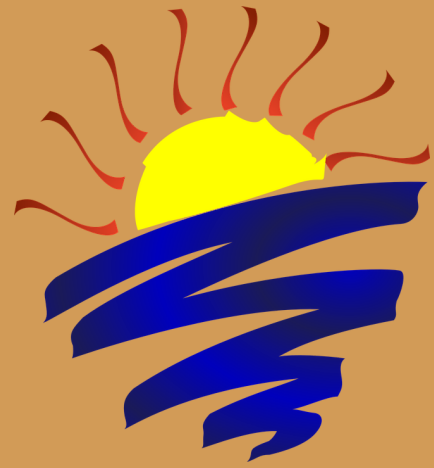
Center For Workforce Innovation Career Station - Participant

I am a father, son, mentor and friend but the path I took to be the person that stands here today has been burdened with a few mistakes and riddled with pain, fear, passion and perseverance. If not for one of the biggest mistakes of my life, getting into a fight which resulted in a felony assault charge I don't believe I would be in the difficult financial place I am in. However, despite this small rough patch in my life, through the grace of my God I was led to the Center for Workforce Innovation.

My family depends on me and the people at the Office of Community Wealth Building understand the importance of getting back on your own two feet so that you can support your family and give them a stable lifestyle.

I have been turned down countless times for a 10 year old felony. The statement "it isn't personal, it's just business," plays on repeat in each employers office.

After landing my dream job in Dallas, Texas teaching restorative practices to educators I was told that a felon can't work in the school district and this broke my heart. Community wealth building is helping me put the pieces back together!



Harlem & Hailey

When I think about my son Harlem, he gives me the motivation to be the best father I can be.

I want to show my daughter Hailey the best example of what a man in her life is supposed to be.

I want my children to understand the importance of helping people even if those you help don't have anything to give in return.

I want my son to be an example of what a humble, thoughtful and caring man and provider should be.



Curtis Franklin

Center for Workforce Innovation Career Station - Graduate

The fight to gain back the normalcy in my life has been a challenge. Through the spirit and love from and for my daughters I am able to approach each day with a renewed energy and drive to finding a career that will allow me to live a sustainable and self sufficient lifestyle.

"I'm trying to build a new me." As a single African American male who once had sole custody of my daughters and now fighting to get them back I have found it very unfortunate that there are not many services available for single fathers who are either fighting for custody or to keep custody of their children. Finding adequate employment to support my children and be able to pay child support after losing custody on a technicality has been difficult mentally and emotionally.

Still, I strive to be successful and regain custody of my daughters.

Much of my struggles came from lack of knowledge of the systems in which I and many others interact with on a daily basis. The Office of Community Wealth Building has helped me not only find employment it has helped me make more informed decisions as a single father seeking custody of my girls.

Thanks to the staff in the Center for Workforce Innovation I feel I am on the right path to ensure that once I regain total stability, I will be able to maintain that stability. Me stepping foot in the Center for Workforce Innovation was the best thing that ever happened to me. Before I walked into that center every turn I made it seemed like there was a shut door!

**EVERY TURN I MADE IT SEEMED
LIKE THERE WAS A SHUT DOOR...**



Serenity & Cherish

When we visit our dad we always greet him with a huge hug! We're always asking does he have a car or house yet.

We enjoy watching movies with our dad, our favorite movie is Moana!

**WE LOVE BEING AROUND
OUR DAD BECAUSE HE'S
ALWAYS BEEN AROUND
US!**

We like to ride the bus with our dad. He laugh and joke the whole ride. Daddy calls us his minions, like from movie, because of how we used to talk.

Daddy doesn't have much but we have fun anyway, at parks, the science museum, and Walmart.



Kiocia Wilkerson

Interviewer: What is the American Dream to you?

Kiocia: I am more of a family person so I like to do things together. I watched a lot of movies as a child but when I grew up I saw that those things on TV, didn't fit my story. It doesn't show the real struggle of people and how they got to the successful places they've gotten to.

My goal is to first have a good area and community that loves my children just as much as me and helps me find good resources like schools and supplies. In the area that I live in, my daughter's school even has trouble supplying schools supplies to the children. The school asks parents to help, we do our best but when you are living in an area of poverty it is difficult. We do the best that we can because we all want the best education possible for our children but its just hard. That is the number one thing that I instill in my children because they follow what they see. That is why I am trying to further my education by going to J. Seargent Reynolds Community College. I want them to want to go to school and say this is what my mother instilled in me.

Interviewer: Have you always believed in the American Dream?

Kiocia: When I was a child I wanted to be a lawyer. I didn't really know what a lawyer was at the time I just knew they were supposed to care about their people and I love anything that cares about people. For example, now I am going to school for Human Services.

Growing up I have been through a lot of abuse so over time I was forced to grow up fast at an early age. I had to make a lot of sacrifices over the course of my life. Through all of my struggles I started to understand that even if I took all that time, money and energy to be a lawyer I would end up in debt and still probably not land that dream job I wanted.

When you come up in poverty you cant take the same route as someone who "has". I was just never the person who let my situation determine where i wanted to go. I was growing up in so much disruption and corruption that could've changed my whole dream of going to school. I didn't want to end up dead or in jail and I don't want that for my children. I will never stop trying to reach my dream. So I continue to push for better!

Interviewer: What do you want your future to look like?

Kiocia: I want to be able to get my family out of poverty. Whether its starting with my generation and next generation but to instill values of education and security and loving your family members and community. loving your family. I don't wan my family to have to indulge or be a part of any negativity.

My goal is to get them out of poverty, get them a good education and leave them property to be able to raise their kids in. I plan on raising a successful family and to keep that momentum going! I will break the cycle of generational poverty in our family!

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY WEALTH

BI...



[Click to Watch Video](#)



Felicia Beckett

Center for Workforce Innovation
Career Center - Graduate

Hi my name is Felicia Beckett and I came to Richmond VA at the end of 2015 and unfortunately had a stroke when I got here and found myself in rehab for the first six months of my time here.

In October 2016 I came to CWI to look for help. I came here in order to have someone to look at my resume because I couldn't figure out why I couldn't find a job. Ms. Harris graciously helped me and I joined her professional networking class and she helped me with refining my resume.

The Center for Workforce Innovation also helped me redefine my gifts and talents, it also helped me to discover dormant talents that allow me to bloom in other areas of my life that I hadn't even thought about. I have been working here now for about a year and in the time I have been working here it has allowed me to be able to better communicate with a diverse group of people. And one of the things for sure that CWI does is, help a myriad of people, not just from one sector of life but from many sectors of life.

I have found re-purpose for my life here in a sense to be able to support woman of sage in order to mentor women. CWI is a great place to be and has helped me get the training in technology I needed as well as furthering my education. CWI has boundless opportunities to help people better their lives, to think outside the box and doing things in their life they never thought about doing before.



[Click To Watch Video](#)

Alkendrick Wright

Center For Workforce Innovative Participant
Career Station - Graduate


My name is Alkendrick Wright. I came to the Center for Workforce Innovation seeking employment. They were pretty friendly and positive, they kept me motivated. They had a whole process they take us through and prepare us to put ourselves out there into the work field. There are a couple classes you have to take before you can get a case manager.

When you get a case manager it's easier because they help you one on one and try to get you on track.

They have sheets they set up for you with goals to try and help you further your career and where you want to go in life.

There is a lot of opportunity at CWI. I am currently working security and they helped me with that. I stay in contact every now and then to find out what new trainings and employment opportunities are available in the city. I encourage everybody to come to CWI because it will help you get back on your feet and shed some light on the direction your trying to go.

***"I AM CURRENTLY WORKING
SECURITY AND THEY HELPED
ME WITH THAT"***



Valaryee Mitchell
Workforce Administrator

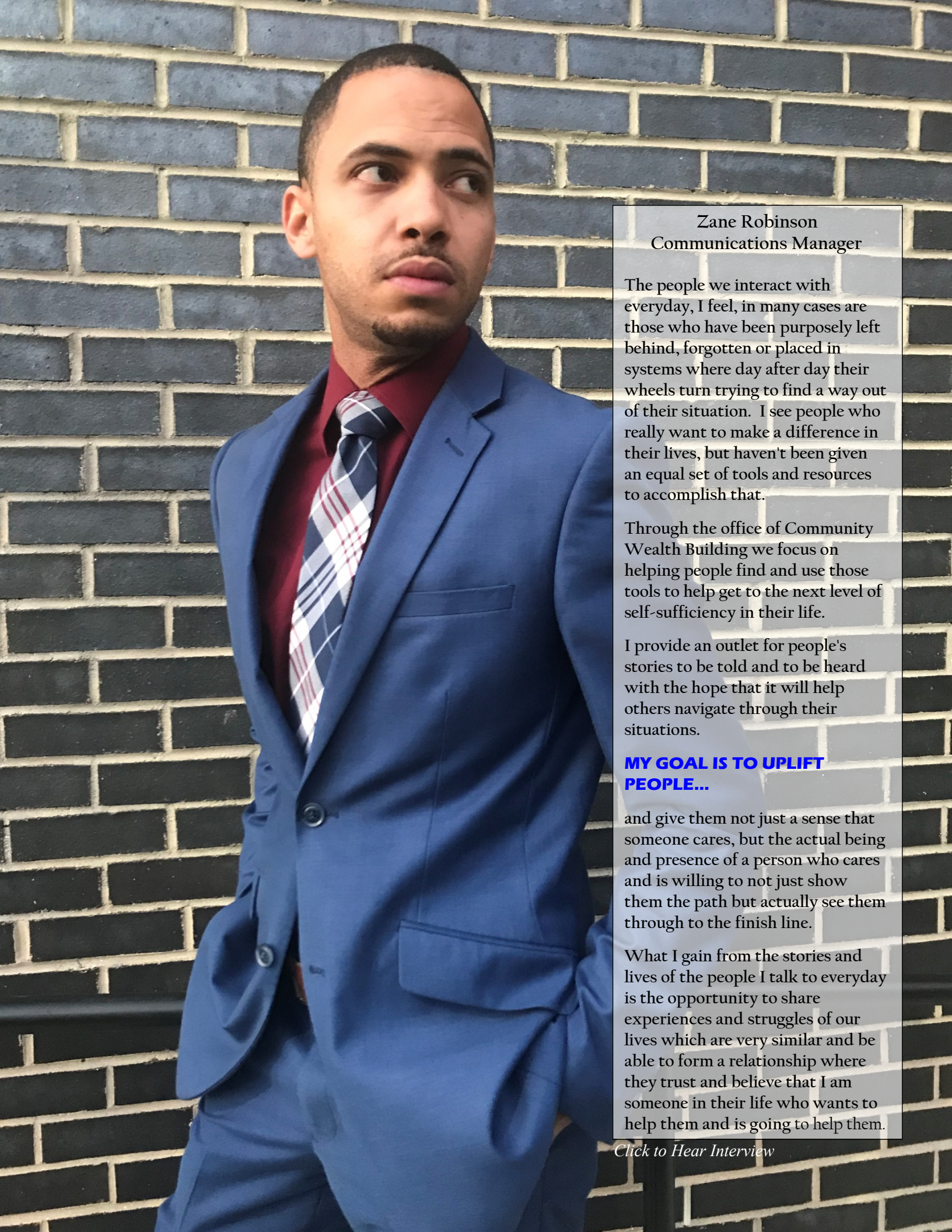
There is no better joy than someone coming in and saying "I got a job, you changed my life." At the end of the day the bureaucracy, the policy the partnerships, none of that matters if we are not helping people change their lives. The participants that come in here every day and the people who need our services, are the most important part of my work.

The training is one of the most important components of what we provide because we know that through any training, whether it be short term or long term, it can exponentially change someone's life in regards to their ability to get a job, how quickly they get a job, the rate of pay and also having an advocate and a supporter who can encourage them and hold them accountable. It is very important that we not only offer training programs but that we are here to support and wrap around the people we serve.

**OFFERING HOPE GOES A LONG WAY WITH
THE PEOPLE THAT WE SERVE!**

Workforce development and human services was not my original career path. I thought I was going to be a corporate lawyer but ended up in workforce development. I took a deferred enrollment upon being accepted into law school so that I could save money. During that time I found employment in a workforce development center and realized it was always where I was supposed to be because I love helping people.

If the work that I do can change someone's life, then that is what I want to do!

A man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a blue suit jacket, a maroon shirt, and a patterned tie, stands against a dark brick wall. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression.

Zane Robinson
Communications Manager

The people we interact with everyday, I feel, in many cases are those who have been purposely left behind, forgotten or placed in systems where day after day their wheels turn trying to find a way out of their situation. I see people who really want to make a difference in their lives, but haven't been given an equal set of tools and resources to accomplish that.

Through the office of Community Wealth Building we focus on helping people find and use those tools to help get to the next level of self-sufficiency in their life.

I provide an outlet for people's stories to be told and to be heard with the hope that it will help others navigate through their situations.

MY GOAL IS TO UPLIFT PEOPLE...

and give them not just a sense that someone cares, but the actual being and presence of a person who cares and is willing to not just show them the path but actually see them through to the finish line.

What I gain from the stories and lives of the people I talk to everyday is the opportunity to share experiences and struggles of our lives which are very similar and be able to form a relationship where they trust and believe that I am someone in their life who wants to help them and is going to help them.

[Click to Hear Interview](#)

WE WANT OUR PARTICIPANTS TO HAVE A HIGHER LEVEL OF OPPORTUNITY AND CHANCES FOR SUCCESS



The Center for Workforce Innovation (CWI) is working to expand and improve employment pathways. CWI prepares participants in their pursuit to obtain and maintain well-paying sustainable employment with training support, and connects them with local employers.



Business enterprises whether non-profit, employee-owned or privately owned, that are deliberately structured and operates to create a social good. The specific designated social and economic good for Richmond's social enterprise program, is to reduce poverty by creating and circulating wealth in low-income communities.



Recognizing that there are multiple barriers to achieving self-sufficiency beyond just employment, CWI, in collaboration with OCWB, launched a new program called BLISS, which provides wrap-around holistic support services to targeted participants who are heads of household. BLISS helps participants identify and overcome barriers to success, and addresses the comprehensive needs of participating households. Ultimately, the program is designed to help families take the long-term steps necessary to escape poverty and achieve self-sufficiency.

A long-term, lasting solution to poverty must be anchored in an economic development strategy that generates jobs. The Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB) is working to expand and improve the way in which residents are connected to local employers, and supports programs which provides training and development to participants striving to obtain and maintain well- paying, sustainable occupations.

Number of non-duplicated
Participants served last year

55%

Success Rate



Average Wage of participants
hired through CWI Activities

\$10.42

Participants
completed training's
and workshops

1,841

**With assistance from the BLISS
Program, participants on average
received a promotion of**



\$3.25

22 Mayors Youth Academy, Future
Leaders Program Youth Justice
members were trained on judicial
processes, completed a mock bar
training and exam, and served
on a panel that presided over
real school discipline cases
involving their peers.

*CWI PARTICIPANTS HIRED
193 LAST YEAR*



Four BLISS participants improved
their housing situation (Moved
out of RRHA to home ownership)



Awarded 1.9 million dollar grant
(RVA-GPS) to expand services
and bring to scale and strategies
that help participants, including
those with multiple barriers to
becoming employed, - prepare
to enter and maintain
employment with the prospect
of a career path and wage
growth.



**300 YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN MYA
SUMMER EMPLOYMENT AND
PROGRAMMING**



“ THE HARDEST PART OF
LIFE IS NOT SOLELY
THE JOURNEY ITSELF,
BUT TRAVELING THE
JOURNEY ALONE. THE
PATHWAY TO SUCCESS
LOOKS MUCH
BRIGHTER WHEN YOU
HAVE PEOPLE WHO
CARE TO HELP YOU
CLEAR THE WAY! ”

**COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDERS
RVA**

**CHANGING
LIVES
ONE
FAMILY
AT
A
TIME**

JOIN US AT

RICHMONDGOV.COM/COMMUNITYWEALTHBUILDING

OR CALL 804-646-6374

#IAMCWB

