

# Research paragraph



The Job Outlook in Virginia Though the unemployment rate edged up slightly in the recent past, the job outlook in Virginia remained very bright. While Virginia's jobless rate hit 3 percent in November 2007, that was well below the US national rate of 5 percent (Blackwell, 2007). The job market has been bolstered by the seasonal increase in the transportation and retail sectors, but has also seen increases in government, private education, and health care. Of particular interest in the employment status in Virginia is the type of jobs being created. According to Blackwell (2007), " The state also recorded its highest-ever nonfarm payroll employment of nearly 3. 83 million in November". This is an indication that the jobs are better paying and higher skilled. These statistics add up to the fact that Virginia has the eighth lowest unemployment rate in the nation and the Richmond metropolitan area has the third lowest rate of the 49 largest metropolitan areas in the United States (Blackwell, 2007). Anyone considering locating in Virginia can have some confidence that they will meet an expanding labor market.

### Skills in the Workplace

When it comes to finding a job, along with a degree or a professional diploma the job seeker will need to possess the desired workplace skills. A recent study by The Conference Board titled " Are They Really Ready to Work" outlined the qualities that potential employers look for in their applicants. The report pointed out that while the 3Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) are still important, there are other traits that are just as necessary. Oral communications, teamwork, ethics, and critical thinking were at the top of the list of skills needed to succeed in today's workplace. Leadership was also cited by 81. 8 percent as " very important for new entrants with a four-year college diploma" (p. 14). While a four-year diploma has become almost

mandatory for any position in the economy, employers are finding that many degree holders do not measure up. Written communications was cited as very important to over 90 percent of the respondents, yet over one quarter of them found that new entrants with a four-year diploma were deficient in that area (p. 14). In addition to a degree, it has become increasingly important to acquire these other skills to compete in today's job market.

#### References

- Blackwell, J. (2008, January 10). Unemployment in area up slightly in November. Richmond Times. Retrieved January 25, 2008, from <http://www.inrich.com/cva/ric/news/business.apx.-content-articles-RTD-2008-01-10-0068.html>
- Casner-Lotto, J., & Barrington, L. (2006). Are they really ready to work. The Conference Board. Retrieved January 11, 2008, from [http://21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL\\_REPORT\\_PDF09-29-06.pdf](http://21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf)