

Virginia Social Services Statewide Recruitment Marketing Plan for Local Agency Positions

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Purpose

A state-supervised and locally administered social services system, VDSS provides guidance to 120 LDSS, delivering a wide array of services and benefits to over 2.2 million Virginians annually. As part of its mission to provide high-quality human services to help Virginians achieve safety, independence, and overall well-being, VDSS and LDSS—in partnership with a third-party consultant—have developed the following plan to promote the social services profession, recruit employees, and strengthen respect for and recognition of this field.

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Audience Personas

An audience persona is a made-up character who personifies the demographics of a target audience. Understanding who the audiences are and what motivates them helps you assess how best to reach them and what key messages will resonate with them.

The Statewide Recruitment Marketing Plan Personas are attached.

Goals, Key Actions, Messaging, and Communications Tactics

Definitions of Terms

Likely Positions	Jobs VDSS/LDSS expects the persona to apply for
Goal	A broad statement outlining the desired outcome to be accomplished over a certain period of time
Objectives	Describe the actions or activities involved in achieving a goal
Key Actions LDSS	Specific activities for local agencies that are critical to achieving the goal
Key Message about Profession	The main idea we want the audience to understand and remember about the profession
Other Messages about Profession	Other or segmented ideas we want the audience to understand and remember about the profession
Key Recruitment Messages	The main idea we want the audience to understand and remember about why to apply
Other Recruitment Messages	Other or segmented ideas we want the audience to understand and remember about why to apply
Communication Tactics	Methods, strategies, and tools to effectively convey information to an audience
Partnership Opportunities	Utilizing partner relationships to build trust and reach new audiences in the community

The five charts below expand into high-level goals and strategies for each of the five personas.

1. Jobseeker, High School Graduate

Likely Positions	Administrative Specialist, Benefit Programs Specialist, and Human Services Assistant
Goal	Each local agency will reach more active, qualified candidates to increase the number of applications for LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Human Services Assistants by 10% over the next three years after the marketing plan launch.

<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make new audiences aware of job openings and career path possibilities in more/new/strategic places • Make new audiences aware of job openings, job descriptions, career paths, and benefits by creating and posting detailed and easy-to-read information online • Establish a united VDSS/LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Family Services Specialists brand through the use of the Statewide Recruitment and Marketing Plan • Develop timeline and track tactics to support gradual increase in applicants over three years
<p>Key Actions LDSS</p>	<p>Because administrators require the least education, the messaging can go wider, but needs to be specific so applicants fully understand what the job entails.</p>
<p>Key Message about Profession</p>	<p>We are creative thinkers and team players who make a difference in our communities by supporting staff, managing operations, and connecting customers to resources.</p>
<p>Other Messages about Profession</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our priority is working with families to get them on track for a better life. • We are a community resource. • We are a social services resource. • We are people’s first connection and their first line to continuing support. • We fill needs now to set community members up for future success. • We get community members back on track so they can be self-sufficient. • We protect and assist our community’s most vulnerable members. • We provide solutions for everyone in our community. • We’re part of the community, we care, and we’re here to meet people and connect them to resources.
<p>Key Recruitment Message</p>	<p>We offer many ways to start and advance your career, all while you support families and the community.</p>
<p>Other Recruitment Messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not just a workplace—we are a community and culture of support that wants you to succeed. • We provide the training and the culture needed to support you as you build a career, become a subject matter expert, and achieve professional success. • We are the first step on your career ladder and will help you climb to greater success. • Be by people’s sides as they prioritize their families. • Be part of positive change in your own community. • Break the chain of poverty/abuse/addiction. • Great benefits—including time for our own relaxation. • Great work, flexible schedule, all close to home. • Improve the trajectory of a child’s life. • Our specialists do a lot of things for a lot of people. Find your fit with our team. • Support the community, person by person, need by need. • Supporting the agency is supporting the community. • There are many opportunities for job growth and skills exploration within the system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uplift families. • We need creative thinkers and problem-solvers on our team. • Work smart to give community members a hand up.
Communication Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand to a variety of outlets to communicate job openings.
Partnership Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High schools • Community colleges • Social media influencers

2. Jobseeker with College Degree in Related Field

Likely Positions	Family Services Specialist (with Human Services Assistant, Benefit Programs Specialist, as second most likely)
Goal	Each local agency will reach more active, qualified candidates to increase the number of applications for LDSS Family Services Specialists by 10% over the next three years after the marketing plan launch.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make new audiences aware of job openings and career path possibilities by leveraging broad digital options and connecting with colleges and creating internships that foster the college-to-LDSS-career path • Make new audiences aware of job openings, job descriptions, career paths, and benefits by creating and posting detailed and easy-to-read information online • Establish a united VDSS/LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Family Services Specialists brand through the use of the Statewide Recruitment and Marketing Plan • Develop timeline and track tactics to support gradual increase in applicants over three years
Key Actions LDSS	Because Family Services Specialists require a college degree, as well as a certain level of experience, the messaging should reach college students and current eligible staff. Partner messaging to colleges and professional organizations should include information about internship programs and current openings.
Key Messages about Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Services Specialists do a lot of things to set families up for success. Find your fit with our team.
Other Messages about Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our priority is working with families to get them on track for a better life. • We are a community resource. • We protect and assist our community’s most vulnerable members. • We provide solutions for everyone in our community.
Key Recruitment Message	We offer many ways to use your degree and advance your career, along with great benefits.

<p>Other Recruitment Messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not just a workplace—we are a community and culture of support that wants you to succeed. • We provide the training and the culture needed to support you as you build a career, become a subject matter expert, and achieve professional success. • We are the first step on your career ladder and will help you climb to greater success. • Be by people’s sides as they prioritize their families. • Break the chain of poverty/abuse/addiction. • Great work, great benefits—including time for our own relaxation. • Improve the trajectory of a child’s life. • Our specialists do a lot of things for a lot of people. Find your fit with our team. • There are many opportunities for job growth and skills exploration within the system. • Uplift families. • We need creative thinkers and problem-solvers on our team.
<p>Communication Tactics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post open positions on all websites, push on social media, and attend job fairs • Expand internship opportunities and direct connections with colleges • Attend college and career fairs
<p>Partnership Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local colleges with related degrees • Virginia colleges with related degrees • Social media influencers • Professional organizations

3. LDSS Employee

<p>Likely Positions</p>	<p>Administrative Specialist, Benefit Programs Specialist, or Family Services Specialist</p>
<p>Goal</p>	<p>Each local agency will reach more active, qualified candidates to increase the number of applications for LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Family Services Specialists by 10% over the next three years after the marketing plan launch.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make LDSS employees aware of job openings and career path possibilities by leveraging broad digital options and word-of mouth in and among agencies • Make LDSS employees aware of job openings, job descriptions, career paths, and benefits by creating and posting detailed and easy-to-read information online • Develop timeline and track tactics to support gradual increase in applicants over three years
<p>Key Actions LDSS</p>	<p>Request staff share open positions with their networks. Incorporate a process and messaging to make this easier and speak with the same voice.</p>
<p>Key Message about Profession</p>	<p>Experienced professionals are essential to protecting the vulnerable and guiding families to create safe and healthy environments.</p>

<p>Other Messages about Profession</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our priority is working with families to get them on track for a better life. • We are a community resource. • We are a social services resource. • We are people’s first connection and their first line to continuing support. • We fill needs now to set community members up for future success. • We get community members back on track so they can be self-sufficient. • We protect and assist our community’s most vulnerable members. • We provide solutions for everyone in our community. • We’re part of the community, we care, and we’re here to meet people and connect them to resources.
<p>Key Recruitment Message</p>	<p>We offer many opportunities for growth within the system, especially for those who are experienced.</p>
<p>Other Recruitment Messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not just a workplace—we are a community and culture of support that wants you to succeed. • We provide the training and the culture needed to support you as you build a career, become a subject matter expert, and achieve professional success. • Continue to be by people’s sides as they prioritize their families. • Continue to be part of positive change in your own community. • Break the chain of poverty/abuse/addiction. • Great work, great benefits, flexible schedule, all close to home. • Improve the trajectory of a child’s life. • Our specialists do a lot of things for a lot of people. Find your next step with our team. • Continue to support the community, person by person, need by need. • Supporting the agency is supporting the community. • There are many opportunities for job growth and skills exploration within the system. • Continue to uplift families. • We need creative thinkers and problem-solvers on our team. • Continue to work smart to give community members a hand up.
<p>Communication Tactics</p>	<p>Utilize and encourage agency word-of-mouth, reinforced by detailed job descriptions on job boards and websites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster inner-office and inner-agency word-of-mouth processes; consider creating a staff recruitment reward system • Post open positions on job boards (Indeed, LinkedIn, etc.) • Post open positions on all websites
<p>Partnership Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional organizations • Community influencers

4. Customer

Likely Positions	Administrative Specialist and Benefit Programs Specialist (with Human Services Assistant as second most likely)
Goal	Each local agency will reach more active, qualified candidates to increase the number of applications for LDSS Administrative Specialists and Benefit Programs Specialists by 10% over the next three years after the marketing plan launch.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make customers aware of job openings and career path possibilities by leveraging their connection to LDSS and the community • Make customers aware of job openings, job descriptions, career paths, and benefits by creating and posting detailed and easy-to-read information online and in print • Establish a united VDSS/LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Family Services Specialists brand through the use of the Statewide Recruitment and Marketing Plan • Develop timeline and track tactics to support gradual increase in applicants over three years
Key Actions LDSS	Attend as many local events as possible to “put a face” to the position and answer questions. Create “leave-behinds” with info about positions and where to find more information.
Key Message about Profession	We are advocates for positive change, working to empower communities one person/family at a time.
Other Messages about Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a social services resource. • We are people’s first connection and their first line to continuing support. • We fill needs now to set community members up for future success. • We get community members back on track so they can be self-sufficient. • We’re part of the community, we care, and we’re here to meet people and connect them to resources.
Key Recruitment Message	We offer the opportunity for you to use your expanded knowledge and immense empathy from your lived experience to support positive change in your own community, along with great benefits and a flexible schedule—all close to home.
Other Recruitment Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not just a workplace—we are a community and culture of support that wants you to succeed. • We provide the training and the culture needed to support you as you build a career, become a subject matter expert, and achieve professional success. • We are the first step on your career ladder and will help you climb to greater success. • Be part of positive change in your own community. • Great work, great benefits, flexible schedule, all close to home. • Many opportunities for growth within the system. • Support the community, person by person, need by need.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the agency is supporting the community. • There are many opportunities for job growth and skills exploration within the system. • We need creative thinkers and problem-solvers on our team. • Work smart to give community members a hand up.
Communication Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize in-person events to connect directly and offer a second point of connection • Attend community events • Welcome the community into the office by hosting an agency open house • Attend job/career fairs • Hand out and leave behind informational flyers or brochures and business cards • Post recruitment posters in community and workforce centers, send to partners with request to display • Advertise on billboards along major routes • Place ads in local publications (digital and/or print) • Post to local workforce boards • VIEW workers word-of-mouth
Partnership Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High schools • Community colleges • Government institutions • Cultural and religious organizations • Civic groups

5. Career Switcher

Likely Positions	Administrative Specialist, Benefit Programs Specialist, or Family Services Specialist
Goal	Each local agency will reach more active, qualified candidates to increase the number of applications for LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Family Services Specialists by 10% over the next three years after the marketing plan launch.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make new audiences aware of job openings and career path possibilities in more/new/strategic places • Make new audiences aware of job openings, job descriptions, career paths, and benefits by creating and posting detailed and easy-to-read information online • Establish a united VDSS/LDSS Administrative Specialists, Benefit Programs Specialists, and Family Services Specialists brand through the use of the Statewide Recruitment and Marketing Plan • Develop timeline and track tactics to support gradual increase in applicants over three years
Key Actions LDSS	Because this audience is looking for a career path (and not just a job), lead messaging with career path benefits, such as variety, opportunity for growth, insurance, and retirement.

Key Message about Profession	We empower families to create safe and healthy environments by connecting them with essential resources and services.
Other Messages about Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our priority is working with families to get them on track for a better life. • We are a community resource. • We are a social services resource. • We are people’s first connection and their first line to continuing support. • We fill needs now to set community members up for future success. • We get community members back on track so they can be self-sufficient. • We protect and assist our community’s most vulnerable members. • We provide solutions for everyone in our community. • We’re part of the community, we care, and we’re here to meet people and connect them to resources.
Key Recruitment Message	We offer dynamic and diverse work settings, many viable career paths, and great benefits.
Other Recruitment Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not just a workplace—we are a community and culture of support that wants you to succeed. • We provide the training and the culture needed to support you as you build a career, become a subject matter expert, and achieve professional success. • We are a step on your career ladder that will help you climb to greater success. • Be by peoples’ sides as they prioritize their families. • Be part of positive change in your own community. • Break the chain of poverty/abuse/addiction. • Great benefits—including time for our own relaxation. • Great work, flexible schedule, all close to home. • Improve the trajectory of a child’s life. • Our specialists do a lot of things for a lot of people. Find your fit with our team. • Support the community, person by person, need by need. • Supporting the agency is supporting the community. • There are many opportunities for job growth and skills exploration within the system. • Uplift families. • We need creative thinkers and problem-solvers on our team. • Work smart to give community members a hand up.
Communication Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize tactics that connect with active, experienced jobseekers • Post open positions on job boards (Indeed, LinkedIn, etc.) • Post open positions on all websites • Attend job/career fairs • Use social media boosting or ads to connect with specific audiences • Create videos about work of positions, post to website and social media
Partnership Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media influencers • Community influencers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government institutions • Cultural and religious organizations • Civic groups
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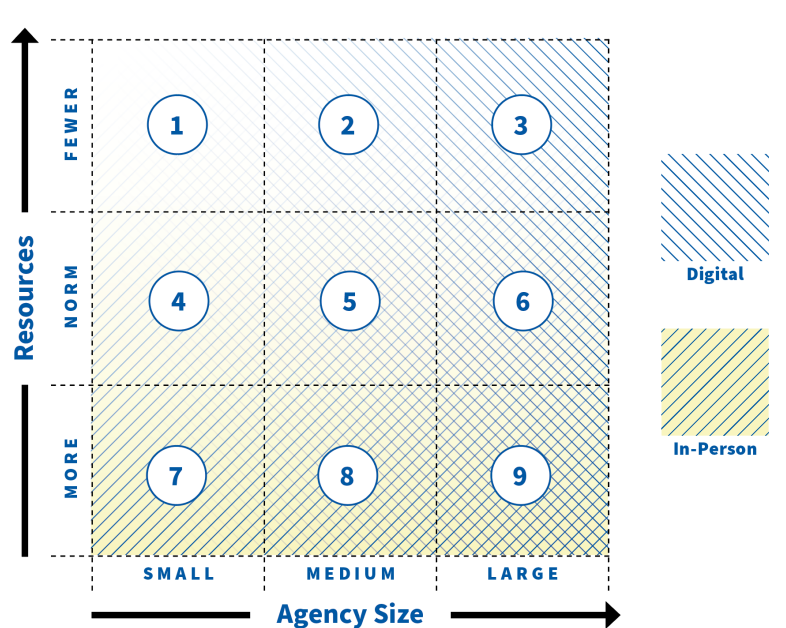
Assessing Agency Capacity

To ensure this plan is useful across the Commonwealth, we recognize that agencies are staffed and resourced differently. The guide below allows agencies to self-identify by agency size and resources to assess which tactics to focus on. It also balances digital strategy with in-person strategy with the understanding that the digital approach reaches larger audiences with less effort, while in-person connections foster community relations and—as revealed in the project assessment—leverage current employees who like their work as recruitment resources.

The figure and chart below show how, depending on available resources, larger agencies may have the staff to keep up with a digital strategy, while smaller agencies may want to utilize staff to make community connections that support the agency’s reputation and word-of-mouth as a means of recruitment.

Additionally, depending on agency size, agencies with more resources should have time to be present in-person in their smaller communities, while agencies with fewer resources may need to rely more on the expediency of digital strategies.

Figure 1. Agency Resources, Size, and Capacity Level Self-Selection



Once an agency has identified its capacity, it can use this chart and the subsequent resource allocation guide to frame an initial marketing strategy with digital and in-person tactics categorized by basic, intermediate, and advanced.

Table 1. Digital and Community Marketing Strategy Capacity Guide

<p>1 Resources: Fewer Agency Size: Small</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Basic • Community Marketing Strategy: Basic 	<p>2 Resources: Fewer Agency Size: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Intermediate • Community Marketing Strategy: Basic 	<p>3 Resources: Fewer Agency Size: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Advanced • Community Marketing Strategy: Basic
<p>4 Resources: Norm Agency Size: Small</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Basic • Community Marketing Strategy: Intermediate 	<p>5 Resources: Norm Agency Size: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Intermediate • Community Marketing Strategy: Intermediate 	<p>6 Resources: Norm Agency Size: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Advanced • Community Marketing Strategy: Intermediate
<p>7 Resources: Most Agency Size: Small</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Basic • Community Marketing Strategy: Advanced 	<p>8 Resources: Most Agency Size: Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Intermediate • Community Strategy: Marketing Advanced 	<p>9 Resources: Most Agency Size: Large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Marketing Strategy: Advanced • Community Strategy: Marketing Advanced

Capacity and Cost Tiers

To ensure VDSS/LDSS is set-up for long-term success, outlined below are ideas for strategic execution of the marketing plan at the intersections of three Resource Tiers with three Cost Tiers.

After speaking with stakeholders, the team learned that resources—personnel, time, and budgets—vary not just among but within the regions. The following recommendations are scaled by what an agency may accomplish to effectively reach the most candidates, accounting for all agency sizes and caseloads.

Table 2. Marketing Strategy Tactics by Capacity and Cost Tier

Cost Tier	Basic Marketing Strategy Tactics	Intermediate Marketing Strategy Tactics	Advanced Marketing Strategy Tactics
Free (Staff time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner outreach • Social media posting • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Partner outreach • Social media calendar and posting • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Media outreach • Partner outreach • Social media calendar and posting • Website

<p>Low (Staff time, \$500 or less)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events • Flyers, postcards, brochures • Social media advertising • Social media boosting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events • Flyers, postcards, brochures • Open house • Social media advertising • Social media boosting • Search Engine Optimization (SEO) training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events • Flyers, postcards, brochures • Low production cost video (for social media) • Open house • Social media advertising • Social media boosting • SEO training
<p>High (Staff time, more than \$500)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job boards • Job/career and college/career fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job boards • Job/career and college/career fairs • Pay-per-click ads • Posters • Professional conferences • Retargeting ads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billboards • Branded giveaways • High production cost video (for television) • Job boards • Job/career and college/career fairs • Media tracking • Newspaper/magazine ad • Pay-per-click ads • Posters • Professional conferences • Retargeting ads • SEO strategy • Social media strategy and/or management • Television ad

Regarding the High Cost Tier, there is a wide range of expenditures and potential return on investment (ROI). While high ROI cannot be guaranteed, below is a table to help agencies better identify low-risk, far-reaching communications tactic options.

Table 3. High Cost Tier Tactics Cost Variance, Risk, and Reach

Tactic	Cost Variance	Typical Risk	Typical Reach
Billboards	Generally high, buyers are usually required to buy a package of more than one billboard	Moderate	Far
Branded giveaways	Varies widely based on item and price per item decreases as quantity increases	Moderate	Limited
High production cost video (for television)	Generally high, production costs can vary, but airtime is high	High	Far
Job boards	Varies depending on job board. However, higher cost usually means a larger audience	Low	Far
Job/career and college/career fairs	Varies based on number of attendees	Low	Far

Media tracking	Generally high, varies based on service bought	High	Limited
Newspaper/magazine ad	Varies based on publication and cost would include hiring a graphic designer or paying the publication to design the ad	Moderate	Far
Pay-per-click ads	Varies based on rate per click and length of campaign	Low	Far
Posters	Varies based on size and quantity	Low	Limited
Professional conferences	Varies based on event size	Moderate	Limited
Retargeting ads	Varies based on audience/persona targets and length of campaign	Low	Far
SEO strategy	Varies widely based on who conducts the research and creates the strategy	Moderate	Far
Social media strategy and/or management	Varies widely based on who conducts the research and creates the strategy	Moderate	Far

Performance Metrics

To measure the success of tactics, it’s essential to plan ahead. The metrics below provide general guidelines for what to measure, but agencies should also set goals to gauge whether the efforts and budgets are justified.

Table 4. Guide to Performance Metrics by Tactic

Tactic	Metric
Job boards (Indeed, LinkedIn, etc.)	Benchmark the total number of candidates and total number of qualified candidates to assess if the job description attracts candidates in general and if the description is accurate. Assess before next posting to determine adjustments.
Websites (VDSS, LDSS, county, city)	Monitor, monthly or as needed, the unique visits, total visits, and referral source for career pages to ensure navigation is intuitive/clear enough for candidate to find information.
SEO strategy (VDSS, LDSS, county, city websites)	Monitor monthly, or as needed, keyword rankings in search engine results pages (SERPs), analyzing the profiles of backlinks pointing to your site, and engagement metrics like page views, bounce rate, and click-through rate.
Social media posting (LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram, etc.)	Monitor, at least monthly, the number of post engagements, post shares, post reach, and followers. Continuously monitor the number of tagged mentions by external stakeholders.
Social media boosting (LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram, etc.)	Calculate number of post engagements, audience reached, and conversions.
Social media advertising (LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, X, Instagram, etc.)	Calculate number of post engagements, audience reached, conversions and ad frequency (how often an individual sees the same ad within a specific period).

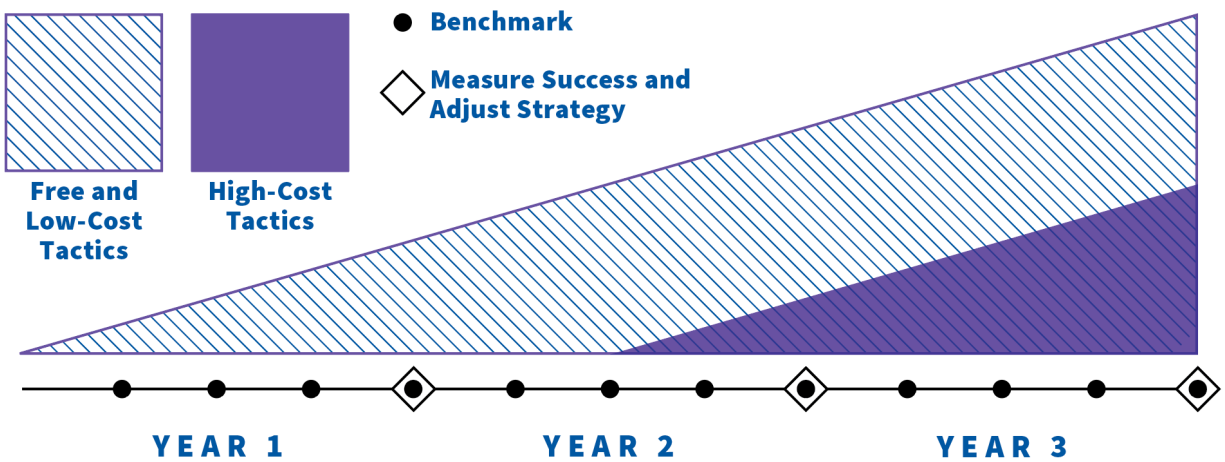
Video (social media)	Monitor video views, audience reached, watch time (amount of time viewers spend watching the video, including repeat views), audience retention (how well the video maintains viewer interest over its duration), drop-off points, and conversions.
Pay-per-click ads (Browsers and social media)	Provider will share statistics, such as clicks and conversions.
Retargeting ads (VDSS, LDSS, county, city websites)	Provider will share statistics, such as clicks and conversions.
Television	Provider will share statistics, such as reach, frequency, and audience demographics. Use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Blog	Benchmark the number of views, view time, and conversions to assess interest in content.
Job/career and college/career fairs	Tally sign-in sheet and total number of people talked to and use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Community events (festivals, cultural/religious events, children’s events, city/county events, etc.)	Tally sign-in sheet and total number of people talked to and use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Open house	Tally sign-in sheet and total number of people talked to and use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Professional conferences	Tally sign-in sheet and total number of people talked to and use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Newspaper/magazine ad	For digital, provider will share statistics, such as reach, frequency, and audience demographics. For print, use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Billboards	Use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Posters	Use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Flyers, postcards, brochures	Use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Branded giveaways	Use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, at least monthly, the number of post engagements, post shares, post reach, and tags. • Add “Friends or Family” and “Partner Organization” selection options for “How did you hear about the job?” intake option on application. If possible, add fields to collect the name and profession of the person recommending the job.

Media	Track/monitor, at least monthly, traditional media mentions. Use trackable URL/QR code to assess conversions for press releases.
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Timeline

Timelines will vary based on agency needs and resources. However, the best approach for most agencies will be to set goals for the next year that can be met with free or low-cost tactics that don't present much budgetary risk. Once the agency measures the success of these efforts, it will be positioned to abandon ineffective tactics and build on what's working.

Figure 2. Timeline Example



Leveraging Existing Communications Vehicles

VDSS has recently launched a new enterprise project to support the transition of the agency's public website to a new, more modern content management system (CMS). This new CMS, which is projected to be completed within 1.5–2 years, will provide increased functionality and design capability for content.

As part of VDSS's current website update project, there is opportunity to optimize space on the VDSS website to educate jobseekers about roles, responsibilities, and career paths at LDSS. This could include ideal candidate personas, templated job descriptions, and/or links to more information and job postings.

Once the VDSS website is updated with the new roles, responsibilities, and career paths, create space on VDSS communication channels to educate jobseekers about positions at LDSS and to tell stories about and celebrate the work being done. This could include adding routine subject matter postings to the existing content calendar, awarding and profiling outstanding employees, and/or creating templates for these topics for LDSS use on a more localized scale.

Additionally, build a high-level strategy for VDSS and LDSS in-person engagement with talent pools (for example, college students, LDSS employees, and/or experienced professionals) to educate them about roles, responsibilities, and career paths at LDSS. This could include representation at college fairs, career fairs, professional conferences, community events, and informational sessions for current staff.

Use a variety of outlets to communicate job openings.

VDSS:

- Add more visual elements to the careers page, which will help balance text and white space, ensuring engagement and clarity.
 - Optimize and potentially expand website content targeted to job applicants or a dedicated landing page to capture the interest of potential candidates.
 - Once integration of the agency's new content management system is completed, create a more intuitive website menu structure and easily accessible links, such as the LDSS agencies list, to help applicants find local job opportunities. Add clear calls-to-action, inviting visitors to take the next step in their job search journey. (“Discover your future.”)
 - Consider additional strategies for LinkedIn and calendars to ensure constant activity.
 - Incorporate brand colors and fonts consistently; this will strengthen brand awareness.
 - Increase contrast and enlarge fonts.
 - Optimize visibility of logo and buttons.
- Reconfigure navigation on the Local Listings page, as well as unclear instructions for job searches. Include concise, informative content about available positions, including full job descriptions and key differences between similar job titles.
 - Use consistent spacing, capitalization, and text size to improve legibility.
 - Use visual hierarchy rules, which will help organize and better display key information.
 - Continue to create LinkedIn posts at least monthly.
 - Continue to post frequently on multiple platforms with a range of topics.
 - Continue to use LinkedIn to reach professionals interested in career opportunities.
 - Consider building a social media calendar that outlines post type and subject matter cycles to keep follower interest.
 - Utilize social media analytics to track success, then optimize messaging, format, and timing accordingly.

LDSS:

- Provide fundamental information about the department and its services.
 - Link to VDSS career paths information or post content to local job site.
 - Clarify messaging for job seekers when leading them to external websites for job opportunities.
- Provide detailed descriptions of job categories and duties on websites.
 - If possible, offer additional search features like sorting, filtering, and notifications.

Tagline

A tagline is a brief phrase used to relay a brand's value. To ensure a unified statewide brand that reflects the [core values](#) of all Virginia agencies, use the “People Helping People” tagline as needed in marketing materials.

Elevator Speeches

The Backbone

Administrative Specialists

are families' first connection to the agency and their first line to continuing support. We aren't your typical admins! We are creative thinkers and team players who make a difference in our communities by supporting staff, managing operations, welcoming customers, and connecting them to resources. We're part of your community, we care, and we're waiting to meet you!

The Hands

Benefit Programs Specialists

empower families to create safe and healthy environments by connecting them with resources and services and guiding them through processes to safeguard their interests. We fill urgent needs now to steady the track to self-sufficiency which positions customers for future success. We give our community a hand-up to its full potential, family by family, need by need!

The Shoulders

Family Services Specialists

protect and assist those in need in our community, by guiding customers through complex systems, evaluating needs, and offering everyday support. We uplift the vulnerable to improve their life trajectories and are by our customers' sides on the journey to prioritize their families. We are advocates for positive change, dedicated to providing solutions for everyone in our community!

Building an Ambassador Toolkit

Ambassadors are anyone who will put a brand in a positive light, helping to increase brand awareness. For the LDSS Statewide Recruitment Brand, the primary ambassadors are staff, partners, and influencers.

Partners include civic groups, community centers, county departments, cultural or religious organizations, professional organizations, and schools and colleges. Influencers include community leaders, government leaders, media, and social media influencers.

Supplying ambassadors with a toolkit ensures brand unity and streamlines communications efforts. It also makes the messaging process more efficient—and a lighter lift for the ambassadors.

A basic toolkit can be posted as a webpage containing brand and messaging instructions and downloads. It could include:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brand Vision• Elevator speeches• Fact sheet• Infographics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Press release/media boilerplate messaging• Presentation and talking points• Resource links | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role summaries/career cards• Sample email messaging• Social media posts and graphics• Video |
|--|--|--|

Once the toolkit is in place, create messaging to request assistance from the three primary ambassador groups. Consider scheduling meetings to review the request and toolkit, and include discussion about incentives, such as reciprocal ambassadorships/partnerships, staff rewards for referrals, and tagging and sharing with mutual social media audiences.

Brand Training

To ensure staff and partners understand and align with the LDSS Administrative Specialist, Benefit Programs Specialist, and Family Services Specialist recruitment brand as they represent it to others, offer live brand training and/or a brand training video.

The training should begin with an overview of the brand and why it is important to LDSS recruitment efforts. Explain why and how the audience members serve as brand ambassadors, how they affect recruitment outcome, and how this will help agencies and communities alike.

Review brand terms, such as messaging, traits, visual brand, and voice, and, most importantly, reiterate the goal of unification throughout Virginia regions and among Virginia agencies.

Link to the Ambassador Toolkit and frame and review content, such as the elevator speeches, role summaries, and talking points. Additionally, the training should examine messaging samples from the email messaging, social media posts, and other established content.

Brand Vision

The LDSS Statewide Recruitment Brand will be used by all LDSS personnel to unite our voices when communicating about or advertising for Administrative Specialist, Benefit Programs Specialist, and Family Services Specialist roles. This effort will further elevate, professionalize, and foster awareness about these roles, so agencies are better positioned to hire and retain capable, invested staff.

Glossary

Ambassador: An individual who represents a brand in a positive light to increase brand awareness.

Branded giveaway: An item given to the public for free to promote brand awareness. It usually displays the logo or brand name prominently.

Communications tactics: Methods, strategies, and tools to effectively convey information to an audience.

Elevator speech: A brief and persuasive message aimed at sparking interest in the organization. It's a valuable tool for introductions, communicating key ideas, and establishing meaningful connections.

Job boards: Online platform where employers list job opportunities and job seekers apply for open positions.

Key actions: Specific activities that are critical to achieving a desired outcome.

Key messaging: The main ideas that an organization wants its audience to understand and remember.

Media outreach: The process of engaging with journalists and media outlets to secure press coverage and exposure.

Media tracking: The process of monitoring brand mentions across various media sources such as news, blogs, print, broadcast, social media, and forums. It involves tracking, with technology or through research, what's being said about the brand, industry news, and other relevant topics.

Partners: Trusted organizations or people who can help reach new or different audiences in the community. They may include regional high schools, regional colleges, government institutions, business associations, churches, civic groups, professional organizations, and other community influencers.

Pay-per-click ads: Form of online advertising where advertisers pay a fee each time their ad is clicked.

Performance metrics: Indicators used to evaluate the results of a particular activity or process. They provide quantitative data that help monitor progress towards goals.

Persona: A profile representing the ideal customer an organization is trying to reach. It guides understanding of an audience's motivations, challenges, and the best ways to interact with them.

Retargeting ads: Online advertisements aimed at users who have previously interacted with a brand. The goal is to re-engage users who may have left the website without taking the desired action.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy: A plan to increase a website's visibility in search engine results pages. It involves improving different parts of the website, such as content, keywords, and technical elements so users can find it more easily.

Social media:

- **Facebook:** A social media platform where users create profiles, share content such as updates and media, connect with friends, join groups, and follow pages of interest. It supports interactions such as likes, comments, and shares, and offers tools for organizations to engage with their audience.
- **Handle:** Also known as a username, the label users choose on social media to identify themselves and access their accounts.
- **Hashtag:** A word or phrase preceded by the "#" symbol on social media, allowing users to categorize and discover content related to specific topics or themes.
- **Instagram:** A social media platform focused on visual content. Users share photos and videos with their followers, interact with other users through likes, comments and messages, and connect with individuals and organizations of interest.
- **LinkedIn:** A social media platform focused on business networking and employment. Users connect with other professionals in their industry and apply for job opportunities, while organizations use it for recruiting and marketing purposes.
- **Pinterest:** A visually focused platform where users organize images into themed boards to collect and share ideas. It's a place for individuals to explore their interests and find inspiration for projects and hobbies.
- **Reddit:** An online platform where people exchange news, stories, and opinions. Users determine content popularity by upvoting or downvoting posts. It features diverse topics organized into categories known as "subreddits," each dedicated to specific interests. Users create posts focusing on a topic or question and other users reply to them, allowing for ongoing discussions.
- **Snapchat:** A messaging app where users can send photos, videos, text, and drawings to others. These messages are temporary and disappear after they've been viewed, adding a spontaneous element to communication.
- **Social media ad:** A paid advertisement distributed through social media platforms. The ads are generally created from scratch to achieve specific goals and reach a targeted audience.
- **Social media boost:** The process of paying to increase the visibility of a specific post or content. It amplifies an existing post and delivers it to a wider group of people.

Social media post: Content shared on a social media platform consisting of text, images, or videos, to convey a message, share updates and engage with followers.

- **TikTok:** A video-based social media platform where users can create and share short videos, typically ranging from 15 seconds to 3 minutes, featuring various forms of creative expression and entertainment.
- **Twitter/X:** A social media platform where users share short messages of up to 280 characters. It's known for its fast-paced and open nature, serving as a platform for quick updates and public discussions.
- **YouTube:** YouTube is an online video-sharing platform. Users can upload, view, and interact with videos through comments, likes, and subscriptions (following a specific video creator to stay updated on their latest content).