

VIPC Expands Extended Reality Career Opportunities in Virginia

Immersive Technology Development and Role Play Poised To Become a Impactful Professions

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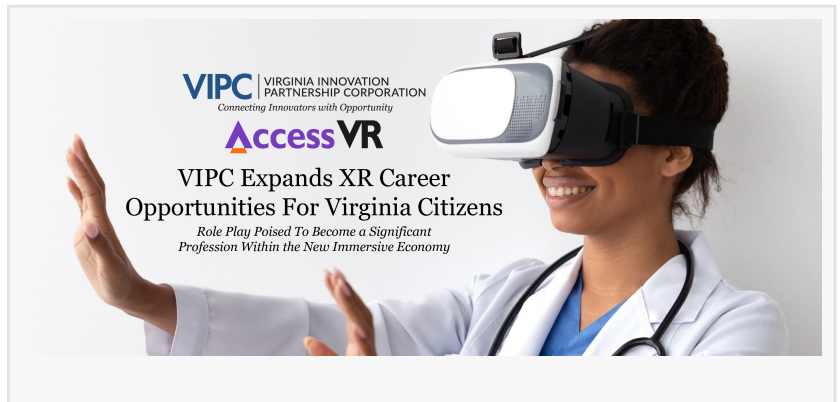
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Innovation Partnership Corporation

([VIPC](#)) is leading the advancement of

XR (extended reality) workforce-related

technologies* in partnership with business, educational, and governmental thought leaders, pioneering the expansion of immersive jobs – like role play – for citizens across the Commonwealth and the nation.



“

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*Sally Anderson, AccessVR,
Manager of role play and
simulation*

Extended Reality (XR) is a comprehensive term that includes Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Mixed Reality (MR), and everything in between. Role players when combined with XR technologies serve as the ‘talent’ for learning scenarios, helping trainees to make decisions under stressful or potentially dangerous circumstances without the risk of real-life consequences. They can provide authentic human interactions such as serving as simulation patients (SPs) for medical practitioners, as victims for first-responder emergency preparedness, as civilians for military tactical training, and more.

“Role play often attracts trained actors as a way to supplement their incomes, but not all role play requires acting expertise,” said Sally Anderson, manager of role play and simulation for [AccessVR](#), an immersive learning company headquartered in Winchester, Virginia. “More often, role play attracts individuals from various professional backgrounds – retired military personnel, nurses, medical doctors, healthcare educators, and others – who want to give back to those who dedicate their lives to helping others.”

“Role play is becoming a significant career option in the immersive economy,” said AccessVR

Chief Immersive Officer, Executive Vice President, and Founder J.J. Ruscella. “The idea of having real people represent diverse demographic backgrounds (i.e., age, gender identity, ethnicity, or disability) is at the core of immersive learning. So, whether we simulate a nurse dealing with a dementia patient in a clinical or home-health setting, or train police officers to interact with individuals in communities with deep ethnic or cultural differences, they can do so within a safe, repeatable, and productive immersive environment.”

In February 2022, VIPC sponsored a Workforce Development Grant providing technology to entry-level role players. More than 50 percent of those technology recipients included retired individuals supplementing their incomes. Since then, AccessVR has hired 52 role players to serve as SPs for the George Washington University School of Nursing among others.

“We love AccessVR’s role players!” said Crystel L. Farina, Ph.D., (c), RN, CNE, CHSE, director of simulation and experiential Learning at GW School of Nursing. “We use them in our graduate simulations for objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), for our [undergraduate] simulation scenarios, and in 360-video learning scenarios. We could not do what we do in nursing education without them.”

According to VIPC Chief Technology Officer David Ihrie, as the immersive marketplace grows, the need for role players will expand. “Immersive experiences are helping to empower and train the mainstream workforce. They are also helping to create opportunities for those among us who are most vulnerable, including individuals with disabilities, retirees, veterans suffering from PTSD, or anyone better served by working remotely,” said Ihrie.

“VIPC is establishing Virginia as a leader in the immersive economy by creating opportunities for technologists and citizens,” said Ruscella. “By providing the opportunity to put these technologies and immersive tools in the hands of local Virginians, we are being positioned to be an innovation leader. It’s a grassroots initiative, led by Virginia with Virginia-based companies serving as ‘boots on the ground’ and making it happen.”

When asked what he would say to anyone aspiring to try this new career, role player Hugh Ghiringhelli said, “I can assure them it will be one of the most personally rewarding, life-enriching side gigs they can possibly have.”

About AccessVR

AccessVR is an immersive learning company, headquartered in Winchester, Virginia, built to provide the leadership, knowledge and innovation that will allow individuals and organizations to adopt immersive learning at scale. It serves clients within the government, military, K-12 and higher education, healthcare, corporate and small business sectors to unlock human potential by expanding realities and contributing to a more connected and compassionate world.

AccessVR Media Contact:

Cathy Loranger, Director of Marketing & Communications

cloranger@accessvr.com

About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

Connecting innovators with opportunities. The nonprofit operations arm of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA), VIPC is the commercialization and seed stage economic development driver in the Commonwealth that leads funding, infrastructure, and policy initiatives to support Virginia's innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, and market development strategies. VIPC collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support the expansion and diversification of Virginia's economy.

Programs include: Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | Virginia Founders Fund (VFF) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Smart Communities | Unmanned Systems | Public Safety Innovation | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement. For more information, please visit www.VirginiaIPC.org. Follow VIPC on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

VIPC Media Contact:

Angela Costello, VP of Communications & Marketing
angela.costello@virginiaipc.org

Angela Costello, Vice President of Communications
Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)
+1 757-870-6848
[email us here](#)

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