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*September 1, 2022*

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## **Save the Date for Upcoming GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting**

**November 2, 2022:** GO Virginia Region 2 Full Council Meeting, 1 PM - 3 PM

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## **Next Submission Deadline: October 5, 2022 by 5 p.m.**

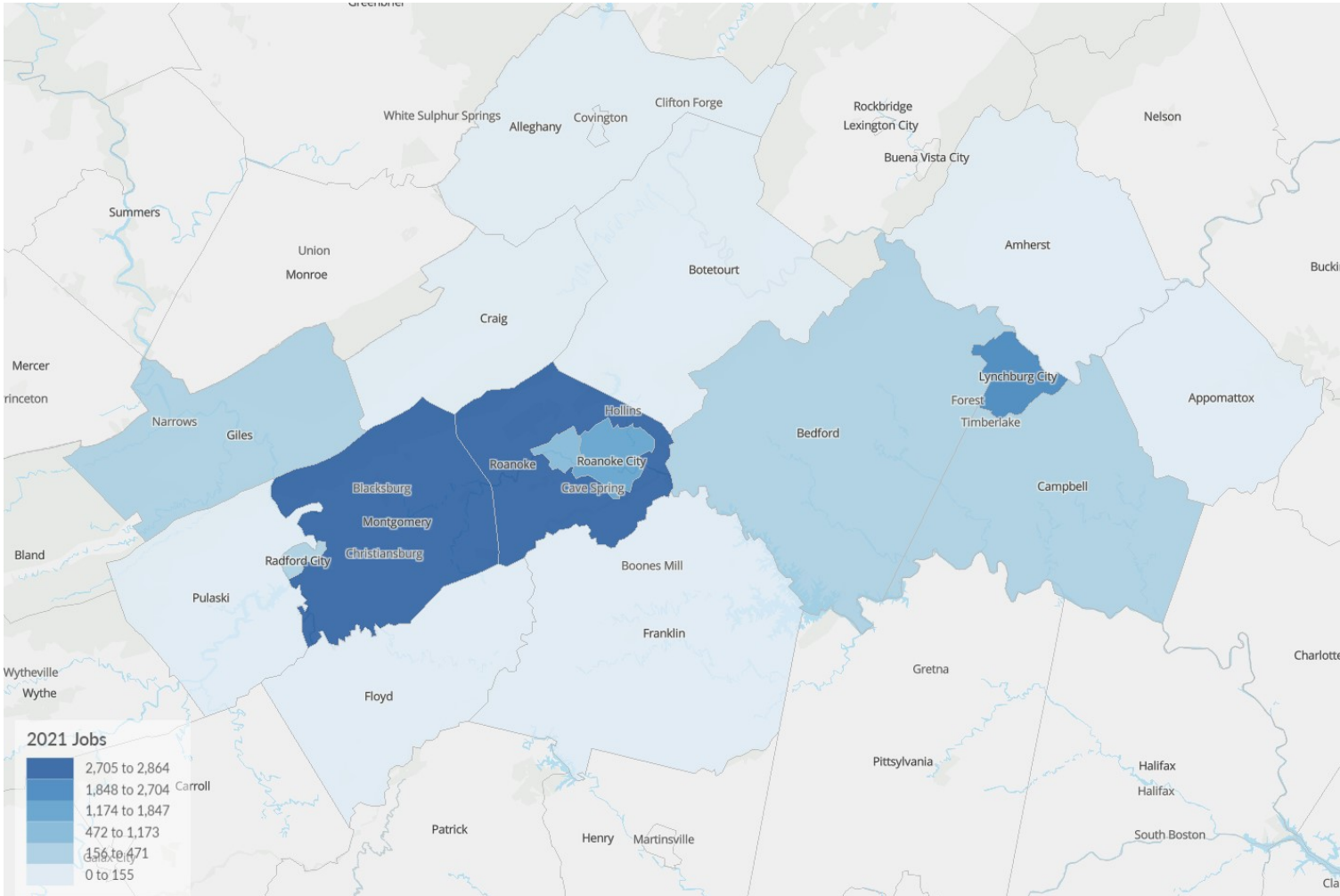
There are \$620,294 in implementation grant funds available for FY22 and \$1,527,228 available for FY23 for Region 2 focused projects, and additional statewide competitive funds are available for multi-regional proposals. There is \$250,000 available for Enhanced Capacity Building (planning) projects. Relaxed match requirements of 2:1 with a waived local match remain in effect; however, local participation is still required.

Learn more on our website: <https://cece.vt.edu/GOVAR2/RequestforProposals.html>

## IT and Emerging Technology in GO Virginia Region 2: Situation, Challenges, and the Road Forward

Read our white paper focused on the present conditions and performance of the IT and emerging technology industries in Region 2. Section one includes an overview of the sector, discussing both IT occupations and IT companies. Section two presents two key issues: capital and talent, before concluding with thoughts on talent attraction and retention and higher education-based solutions.

Read the white paper here: [https://cece.vt.edu/content/dam/cece\\_vt\\_edu/govirginia\\_documentation/IT%20and%20Emerging%20Technology%20in%20GO%20Virginia%20Region%202.pdf](https://cece.vt.edu/content/dam/cece_vt_edu/govirginia_documentation/IT%20and%20Emerging%20Technology%20in%20GO%20Virginia%20Region%202.pdf)



*Image source: EMSI GOVA Region 2 IT and Electrical Cluster Industry Snapshot. 2022. EMSI.*

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# Meet a GOVA Region 2 Grantee: Cynthia Lawrence, Building a Regional Health Sciences Talent Pipeline



## **1. What was the first job you ever had and what did it teach you?**

I got my first job at 16 with John Norman Clothiers. It was a men's store in Roanoke that had added a women's department, and I worked after school and on Saturdays. It taught me a lot of customer service skills, including how to listen to people's needs and how to come up with solutions. I also learned what hard work retail is. Long hours, on your feet, and always presenting with a smile and a sense of gracious hospitality.

## **2. What made you want to be an entrepreneur?**

From an early age, I had an interest in creating something and selling it to the public, which I think is what drove my after-school job at John Norman. My father is a certified public accountant, and we'd always had a business environment in our home. He encouraged my business interest, and when we started the company, he was right there every step of the way. I enjoyed creating the organization, listening to clients' needs, and coming up with solutions. I learned how to lead a team and how to collaborate with others to deliver our products and ensure our customers would be satisfied.

## **3. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to start their own business?**

Having a good finance team around you is very important. You should have a finance partner who understands the dynamic of cash management and can plan for the long term. Having someone who can read the market to help you make decisions in a timely fashion is essential.

## **4. What is your favorite part of your job at Carilion Clinic?**

My favorite part of this job is that I get to help develop a new business model for how the health workforce of the future is developed by working internally across the organization and externally with all of our community partners. All of my love for our region and everything I learned from running a small business for over 30 years has been brought together with what I'm doing now for Carilion. I absolutely love everything I'm doing.

## **5. Can you talk about the inspiration behind your GO Virginia project?**

After I sold my business in 2015, I was fortunate enough to work with Carilion Clinic as the VTC Partnership Director. My job was to work within each of the organizations to find points of common interest that might serve as collaborations to drive the partnership's success.

Throughout this process, it became quickly apparent we were not going to have enough qualified health and life sciences workers to meet the needs of the growing Virginia Tech Carilion enterprise. We knew from industry research we were going to come up against a healthcare worker shortage around 2020. These conversations that I was having in 2017 and early 2018 led us to pull together educators and employers into a conversation about the workforce.

When the pandemic hit, we formalized the work in a more urgent fashion and started to bring the stakeholders together to look at how we could align health sciences education for youth and adults so we could place individuals in health sciences jobs more quickly to meet the immediate need.

**6. The project aims to establish a new model for wide-spread business-education collaboration. What does this model look like?**

We organized the effort using an employer-led collective impact model. In that structure we have an executive committee, a finance subcommittee, and five task forces that look at certain areas of need. Educators are able to be at the same table as employers, K-12 school systems, community colleges, and four-year universities. Student voices are also integrated in some of these task forces. The purpose of gathering these people at the foundational level is so employers get involved in the students' educational process earlier. This will allow employers to inform curriculum so it's relevant and current.

Not only do we want employers to be able to assist with curriculum design, but we also want them to get to know the students at a young age. Employers can develop mentorships and job shadowing opportunities and can talk to young people about their interests, getting them excited about their future. Also, if employers are involved in the educational process, adult learners can become skilled very quickly and be more effective when they move into roles they have recently been trained for.

We are also educating the educator. We want to create opportunities for instructors in the health and life sciences to shadow and learn in an employer environment so they can take firsthand knowledge into the classroom. For a host of factors, there is a nation-wide instructor shortage so rather than employers and academic institutions competing for instructors, we are exploring a shared appointment model, where practicing clinicians are allowed time by employers to teach in an academic setting.

We've had some collaborative solutions already enacted and implemented by some of the school districts and community colleges to help with stackable degrees and transfer credits. One of the task forces is charged with putting together a campaign to encourage folks who might not have considered the health and life sciences to look into it, because the field is broad and varied. For example, if you're a robotics engineer and you're interested in drones, that field is applicable to the health and life sciences. We need all kinds of thinkers involved for the workforce of the future.

**7. What are your future plans for the project?**

In the future, we want to focus on tightening the collaboration between employers and educators. Our immediate next step is to more actively involve our economic development professionals so that we are working collaboratively, not only in the region, but throughout the Commonwealth. We want what we're doing here to be complementary to and supportive of other regions' growth and investment in workforce development initiatives.

**8. What do you enjoy most about being a GO Virginia grantee?**

The advice, the support, and the mentorship that the GO Virginia Region 2 Council and the administrators of the funds at Virginia Tech provide. Everyone has been so supportive of what we're trying to accomplish. It really feels

like we're all working together to make our region a better place, and the Commonwealth a better place. I'm very grateful for the level of collaboration we receive from the Council.

**9. What activities or hobbies do you like to do in your spare time?**

I enjoy music, and I sing and am part of a choir. I also enjoy reading. I like biographies and historical fiction. And a good whodunit from time to time. I also exercise and love tennis.

**10. What's your favorite place to go on vacation?**

I have two favorite places. I love big cities for short periods of time, to go see plays and hear some music, but my favorite place to go to relax is the beach.

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## **Meet a GOVA Region 2 Council Member: Justin Yalung, Inorganic Ventures**



**1. What was your first job and what did it teach you?**

From late middle to early high school, I worked seasonally as a porter at the Port of Norfolk. It involved nonstop handling of cargo and passenger luggage on and off trucks and cruise ships in the summer heat. The porters who worked there full-time showed me a different kind of grit and toughness that I had never seen before that point in my life.

**2. What is your career history?**

After graduating from Virginia Tech with a degree in finance, I moved to Atlanta and joined General Electric's Financial Management Program. I was inspired by Dave Calhoun, then a top executive at GE and now CEO at Boeing, who visited campus and talked to a group of us at the business school. I made my way to Raleigh-Durham and joined IBM where I worked in Mergers & Acquisitions to integrate software companies. I shifted locally into the dynamic world of biotech in a commercial finance role at bioMérieux, which helped me find my way back home to the New River Valley to join TechLab, a fantastic medical diagnostics company headquartered in the Corporate Research Center in Blacksburg. Today, I'm nearing 6 years at Inorganic Ventures (IV Labs), a specialty chemical manufacturer in Christiansburg, and serve as COO & CFO.

### **3. What skills have you found vital to your job at Inorganic Ventures?**

Having a foundation in accounting and finance is valuable. The knowledge I gained from those fields is translatable to every industry. While probably not considered a “skill,” I’ve learned that hard work, a good attitude, and an endless love of learning are even more vital than technical skills.

### **4. How would you describe your leadership style?**

While dependent on the situation, I naturally have a mix of collaborative and servant leadership styles and am learning to grow into transformational leadership. You can probably see the common thread here: people. While I have a diverse experience background, I know that I don’t have all the answers, so I focus on building teams with great people who have complementary experiences.

### **5. What have you learned so far as a GO Virginia Region 2 Council member?**

The council is a group of eager, connected, and accomplished advocates of the region, supported by a talented staff. We have a lot of opportunity in the region that requires both talent and monetary resources in order to advance it to the next level. The real work of the council is about connecting those resources to the right people to unlock the region’s potential.

### **6. Are there any specific ways your work at Inorganic Ventures has tied into your work on the Region 2 Council?**

When we are successful as a region, we attract talented people, which grows the talent pool not only for our company but for other organizations as well. GO Virginia Region 2 is focused on attracting and retaining talent, which is necessary for any business’s success.

### **7. Can you talk about why a program like GO Virginia is important for community and economic development?**

As a state-level initiative, GO Virginia has a large commitment to the commonwealth and has the ability to tangibly help communities with deliverables that grow jobs and quality of life. It has a real impact with real dollars and real jobs, which is refreshing.

### **8. Is there anything that you would like to see GO Virginia Region 2 do more of in the future?**

I am still learning about the potential of the region. Though I’ve been back in the area for a decade now, I have only recently started putting together the pieces of what we are capable of. My vision is for the region to be a sought-after destination, where people go to live, vacation, or start up businesses. It has everything for the right type of person, with numerous natural amenities and a charming pace of life. What’s needed is a catalyst to grow momentum in the region and help it flourish.

### **9. Who has been your greatest mentor and what did you learn from them?**

The founder and chairman of IV Labs, Dr. Paul Gaines and the former CEO of the Virginia Tech Foundation and fellow Region 2 council member, John Dooley have been long-term mentors of mine. Both of these men have helped inspire my people-focused leadership style. They genuinely care about people, which is the best place to start when you want to become a leader.

### **10. What is the most memorable place you have ever visited?**

The most memorable place I have visited is my father’s hometown of Lawy, a small village in the Philippines. My parents immigrated to the United States from the Philippines in the 1970s. My father’s hometown was rural and agricultural and had no running water, plumbing, or electricity. It was starkly different from what I had grown up with.

Visiting the Philippines helped me better understand my parents' philosophy of raising me and my brother and allowed me to learn more about my heritage.

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