

GO Virginia Region 2

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022/2023

Prepared by:  
Virginia Tech Center for Economic and  
Community Engagement, support staff to  
the GO Virginia Region 2 Council



OUTREACH & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND  
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**GROWTH &  
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# Introduction

Region 2 of GO Virginia spans across three metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) and regional commissions on the western half of the state. The region is comprised of the Lynchburg, New River Valley, and Roanoke-Alleghany MSAs. In total, Region 2 contains thirteen counties and five independent cities: the counties of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke; and the cities of Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem.

As of 2022, GOVA Region 2's population has experienced a modest increase of 0.2% since 2017, equivalent to a growth of 1,461 individuals. This growth is slower than state and national rates, which were 6% and 5% respectively. Looking ahead, projections suggest that the population will continue to grow at the same rate through 2027, suggesting some need to attract working age adults and families if the region is to significantly grow demographically and economically.

Each of these areas has a strong history of local cooperation, and some experience with interregional collaboration, primarily between the New River and Roanoke Valleys. Together, they all share many economic similarities: traditional industry strengths in manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture; emerging technology sectors; mixed urban and rural characteristics; and higher education and healthcare as economic and employment drivers.

The four (4) target industry clusters identified in GO Virginia Region 2 in FY23 were:

Region 2 Target Sectors
Transportation & Automation
Life Science & Healthcare
IT & Emerging Tech
Materials & Machinery Manufacturing

Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement serves as Region 2's support organization. The support organization provides fiduciary oversight and administrative services for activities related to GO Virginia in Region 2. This annual report serves as a record and celebration of the activities, partnerships, research, outcomes, and impacts that have been a part of GO Virginia during the past year (July 2022 – June 2023).

# Growth & Diversification Plan

Every Region 2 project recommended by the Region 2 Council and approved by the GO Virginia state board refers back to the strategies and goals outlined by the Region 2 Growth and Diversification Plan. A full plan update and revision was undertaken in June – October 2021.

Creating an easily understandable guide is a priority with the 2023 Growth and Diversification Plan Review, for both GO Virginia applicants to design and submit fundable projects and for the Region 2 Council to assess projects. This plan review centers the four priority industry clusters in Region 2 and emphasizes the current GO Virginia projects and future opportunities through the strategies of talent development and attraction, collaborative development of sites and buildings, entrepreneurship and business development, and industry cluster scale-up.

Between June – October 2023, Region 2 support staff facilitated the plan review through four main actions: 1) analysis of changes in regional and industry cluster economic data through secondary sources (Lightcast, O\*NET, US DOL, American Community Survey), 2) engagement and input from with industry cluster leaders and regional stakeholders through focus groups, 3) prioritization of strategies and further validation by a larger set of regional stakeholders through a regionwide survey, and 4) integration of priorities from industry cluster leaders and review by Region 2 Council Members.

Starting in June 2023 and continuing into the FY24 reporting period, the support organization led a data analysis of regional economic data and industry cluster data. Particular attention was paid to updating wage data, skills gap analyses, and regional trends impacting workforce participation. Region 2 council members were involved in the plan review throughout the process. This 2023 revised analysis saw most socioeconomic, labor, and industry data reverting to pre-COVID levels or continuing on the same trend trajectory from before COVID. One newer trend observed was the population demographics by age. Where the region previously lost professionals in the late 20s and 30s, that demographic group has increased. Meanwhile, early to mid-20s and mid-career professionals (40-55 years) are leaving the region.

# Summary of Projects

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
Cs/root Entrepreneurial Hub	\$175,000	\$12,500	\$162,500	-
Expanding Welding Training Capacity and Jobs in the Roanoke Valley	\$166,667	-	\$96,666	-
Center for Entrepreneurship	\$240,192	\$52,000	\$135,035	-
Airport Commerce Park Regional Development	\$190,000	\$84,074	\$25,000	\$49,000
Industry 4.0 for the ACE Workforce	\$500,000	-	\$251,300	-
Lynchburg Career Acceleration	\$540,000	\$139,000	\$213,200	\$75,200
Metal Workforce Training Center Feasibility Study	\$99,900	\$201,000	-	-
Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II Regional Site Development	\$324,000	\$300,000	\$4,285,000	-

**Cs/root Entrepreneurial Hub | Virginia Tech Department of Computer Science**, *Localities served: Floyd County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Botetourt County, and Roanoke County. The Cities of Radford, Roanoke, and Salem.* CS/Root will provide an establishment of a computer science focused entrepreneurial hub for pre-launch and new founders in highly specialized areas such as cybersecurity, blockchain, cloud and quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and systems integration. CS/root will help diverse groups of local entrepreneurs, students and faculty generate innovative ideas and entrepreneurial endeavors through the following offerings: 1. Mentorship and Advising from seasoned technical founders; 2. Hands-on Training and Support to brainstorm, encourage, develop and implement new technical ideas; 3. Networking Activities that encourage entrepreneurial mindshare and community among CS-focused entrepreneurs; and 4. Growing the Diversity of ideas and participants in the local entrepreneurial community. Project outcomes include 24 jobs created/filled over 3 years, 4 businesses created, 200 entrepreneurs engaged, 40 mentors engaged, and the creation of an entrepreneurship resource portal.

**Expanding Welding Training Capacity and Jobs in the Roanoke Valley | Botetourt County Economic Development Authority**, *Localities served: Botetourt County, Craig County, and localities across the Roanoke Valley.* This project will enhance the region's capacity to train and prepare welders by supporting the installation of ten (10) new welding booths at BTEC's campus in Fincastle. This expansion is projected to deliver forty-five (45) new welders to the regional workforce over the initial three-year project term. BTEC annually instructs welding to

approximately eighty to ninety (80-90) high school students in Craig and Botetourt counties. BTEC has launched an adult welding instruction program in the Fall of 2022, currently with seven enrollees taking ten available seats; adult classes will be taught twice per year. By increasing the number of available welding booths from ten to twenty, Students will become better-trained and better-skilled to meet employers' needs for capable welders. Project outcomes include 45 welders trained in 3 years, 40 American Welding Society (AWS) certificates awarded in 3 years, 12 businesses served, and 10 fully operational welding booths to expand the BTEC welding program.

**Center for Entrepreneurship |Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance,** *Localities served: City of Lynchburg. The counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell. The towns of Bedford and Altavista.* This project will establish an entrepreneurial center of excellence for the Greater Lynchburg region, to serve as an anchor and catalyst for the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Center will foster an environment for new and serial entrepreneurs to raise capital, access resources and garner the support system needed to take their products and/or solutions into the marketplace. The project will support entrepreneurs' by providing direct assistance, (30 clients per year); increasing the available support space for targeted startups by 5,000 square feet; increasing the access to capital by up to \$400,000; and providing 10-12 training and business development events to 200 attendees each year in areas of access to capital, business development, and Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) development. Project outcomes include 42 jobs created, 20 businesses served, \$400,000 in capital raised, formation of a Regional Advisory Board, and an online resource portal.

**Airport Commerce Park Regional Development |City of Lynchburg,** *Localities served: City of Lynchburg and Campbell County.* This project will support due diligence to advance the Airport Commerce Park site from a Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) site characterization Tier 2 to a Tier 3 to strengthen competitive position in the global marketplace and attract advanced manufacturing, technology and life sciences with a potential focus on aerospace. This will include a traffic impact analysis, a preliminary geotechnical exploration and report, a boundary and topographic survey, a Phase 1 environmental assessment, a waters of the US delineation and determination, a cultural resources review, a threatened and endangered species review, and a preliminary engineering report. Development of the Airport Commerce Park would positively position Lynchburg and Campbell County for a number of opportunities for mix businesses, industrial and aeronautical uses, to include advanced air mobility, advanced manufacturing, technology and life sciences (in particular Aerospace). Project outcomes include 95 developable acres from tier 2 to tier 3 along the VBRSP scale and completion of phase 1 due diligence.

**Industry 4.0 for the ACE Workforce |Virginia Tech College of Engineering,** *Localities served: All Region 2 localities, with the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, and Montgomery, and the city of Roanoke providing letters of commitment and support to the project.* This project will advance the region's transportation and autonomous vehicles sector by: 1. Providing Direct Technical Assistance and Advising to sector companies, fostering mutually beneficial relationships and delivering customized solutions for workers and firms, with the assistance of Virginia Tech College of Engineering (VTCOE) faculty domain experts, GENEDGE, and a Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC). 2. Creating a Network Navigator position, to have a designated individual to serve as a point of contact to help companies navigate the network and find the resources that best fit their needs. COE, the PTAC, and the Network Navigator will work as a team to facilitate industry connections to training, testing, and technical assistance resources. The Coalition will also form a Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) consisting



of partners from public agencies, business support nonprofits, and regional community organizations such as EDA-supported Economic Development Districts (EDD). Members will have expertise in education, training, and technical assistance relevant to the cluster. 3. Enhancing and implementing the Industry 4.0 Curriculum that was developed through a prior Virginia Tech-led GO Virginia ECB grant. The Coalition will develop a multiscale curriculum with hands-on training for in-demand jobs and skills for designing, fabricating, testing, production, installation, and maintenance of automated transportation systems. Project outcomes include 530 students/participants trained, 35 businesses served, formation of a Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC), and an online resource portal.

**Lynchburg Career Acceleration Program | Lynchburg Beacon of Hope**, *Localities served: City of Lynchburg, Campbell County, and the town of Altavista, with benefits to localities and employers across the greater Lynchburg region.*

This project seeks to implement a nationally innovative and replicable Promise Career Acceleration model. Focusing on companies and occupations in the Region 2 target industry sectors, the project will accelerate the training, mentorship, career development, and placement of talented opportunity youth and prime-age workers in the greater Lynchburg region. The project will (1) Increase the career capacity of the region by retaining young workers graduating high school; (2) Reconnecting with “pausers” that have some training and college education but no degree or credential and place them into the best paying jobs available in the region; (3) Engaging with two generation households, where parent and children are prime age workers, and connect them to living wage jobs; and (4) Creating a long term career case management system that allows workers to continuously learn and prepare for new job opportunities. Project outcomes include 112 internships completed, 44 certificates awarded, 24 businesses served, playbook for career acceleration for opportunity youth, playbook for promise pausers, and a playbook for 2 gen populations.

**Metal Workforce Training Center Feasibility Study | Town of Bedford Economic Development**

**Authority**, *Localities served: Bedford County, Town of Bedford, localities across the greater Lynchburg and Roanoke region.* This project will develop a master plan for a facility, programming and operation model of a proposed Bedford Regional Metal Workforce Retention Center. The Town of Bedford Economic Development Authority is under contract to purchase a 60,000 square-foot former steel shot factory on 16 acres just 1/10th mile from U.S. Route 460 within the Town of Bedford. The project will further the work of a previous GOVA award to Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) to create a Regional Career and Technical Education Academy. Funding will determine how to specifically establish an industry-led, metal workforce retention center for the CTE Academy to bring together their metal working CTE programs and the end-user industrial businesses that need a trained metal workforce. Project outcomes include a Regional Metal Workforce Retention Center Feasibility Plan.

**Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II Regional Site Development |Montgomery County**, *Localities served:*

*Montgomery County, Town of Christiansburg, localities across the greater New River Valley region.* This project will raise Falling Branch Phase II from a tier 4 to a tier 5 along the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) site characterization scale. Montgomery County, Town of Christiansburg, the Montgomery Economic Development Authority, in addition to Onward NRV's marketing assistance, will build upon a regional 35-acre site collaboration project to grade one 20-acre graded pad, install water and sewer, install natural gas, stormwater and extend electricity, and construct the Parkway Drive Extension road to the 35 -acre site. Project outcomes include 35 acres elevated from a tier 4 to a tier 5 on the VBRSP site characterization scale, 2,800 linear feet of waterline constructed, and 1,400 linear feet of sewer line constructed.

# Regional Collaboration & Partner Support

**Cs/root Entrepreneurial Hub** hosted several networking events focused on the recruitment of mentors and entrepreneurs to host collaborative mentoring opportunities. Companies come from a diverse array of computer science areas including artificial intelligence, software as a service (SaaS), and systems design. The cs/root Director frequently meets with potential companies to vet and advise their applications and progress toward acceptance in the cs/root cohort.

**Expanding Welding Training Capacity and Jobs in the Roanoke Valley** The Botetourt County Economic Development Authority partnered with Botetourt County Public Schools and the Botetourt Education Foundation to enroll high school students for introductory training into welding.

**Center for Entrepreneurship (Lynchburg)** The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance engaged partners through their Regional Advisory Board. Board members and staff collaborating with Co.Starters Accelerator program to create a plan for entrepreneurial ecosystem mapping.

**Airport Commerce Park Regional Development** involves an ongoing collaboration between The City of Lynchburg, Campbell County Economic Development, and the Lynchburg Regional Airport Commission to develop a business and industrial park with aviation uses.

**Industry 4.0 for the ACE Workforce** formation of a Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) consisting of partners with expertise in economic and workforce development and related topics, drawn from public agencies, business support nonprofits, and regional community organizations such as EDA-supported Economic Development Districts (EDD). Members have expertise in education, training, and technical assistance relevant to Innovation Cluster Scale-Up strategies.

**Career Acceleration Program (Lynchburg BOH)** Beacon of Hope successfully engaged 26 industry partners in their Summer 2023 Internship Programs. Developed partnerships with Vector Space and Central Virginia Community College to place student interns.

**Metal Workforce Training Center Feasibility Study (Bedford)** in collaboration with Central Virginia Community College (CVCC), the Town of Bedford will determine how to specifically establish an industry-led metal workforce retention center for CVCC to congregate their metal working CTE programs and end-user industrial businesses seeking a trained metal workforce.

**Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II Regional Site Development (Montgomery)** involves a collaboration between Montgomery County, Montgomery County Economic Development Authority, the Town of Christiansburg, and OnwardNRV's marketing assistance, to raise the corporate park from a Tier 4 to a Tier 5 to greatly enhance the site's marketability.



# Outcomes and Impact

11 implementation projects and three planning (ECB) projects were active in Region 2 and reported between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

The eight active implementation projects collectively achieved the following outcomes during the fiscal year as reported in their quarterly reports:

- Students trained: 2,704
- New jobs created: 45
- Businesses served: 124
- Credentials awarded: 201
- New internships/apprenticeships: 33
- Dual enrollment: 432
- Employees upskilled: 33
- Businesses created: 5
- Entrepreneurs engaged: 325
- Mentors engaged: 12

Additionally, three implementation projects made earnest progress towards their outcome goals with no quantitative metrics gathered as of yet: Amherst Site Readiness, Automated Connected Electrified (ACE) Workforce, and BTEC Welding Training.

Three planning (ECB) projects, The Future Centers Playbook, Future Workforce for Industry 4.0, and BRPHSC all completed their work. Lynchburg Beacon of Hope published their Future Centers playbook and met with Region 2 staff to discuss opportunities for scale up and dissemination. BRPHSC finalized their situational assessment and analysis and held multiple meetings with health workforce stakeholders including K-12, community colleges, and private employers. Future Workforce for Industry 4.0 finalized the industry 4.0 draft curriculum, and an action plan identifying current and future I4.0 employer and technology workforce skill needs following input from external stakeholders.

Finally, two planning (ECB) projects successfully received follow-on per capita grants through GO Virginia to implement their projects. Lynchburg Beacon of Hope successfully was granted an implementation grant for the Lynchburg Career Acceleration Program, after the completion of their Future Centers ECB project. The Virginia Tech College of Engineering was granted an implementation project for Industry 4.0 for the ACE Workforce after the completion of their Industry 4.0 ECB project.

# Communication and Outreach

**GO Virginia Region 2 Newsletters:** Five GOVA Region 2 newsletters were sent out. 931 people are currently subscribed to the list. The newsletters have an average open rate of 39%.

**Regional Roundup newsletter for Region 2 Council:** Staff launched a newsletter called “Regional Roundup: A Memo From the Executive Committee to the GOVA Region 2 Council” in March 2023. The newsletter is sent out after each state board meeting and was sent out two times during the reporting period. 29 people are subscribed to this list. The memos have an average open rate of 61%.

**Region 2 Council Speaker’s Bureau:** Between February and April 2023, Region 2 Council volunteers gave presentations about the GO Virginia Program at the meetings of 4 local organizations (New River Valley Regional Commission, Joint meeting of the Bedford County and Town of Bedford EDA, Central Virginia Planning District Commission, and Pulaski Board of Supervisors). Support staff gave an additional 3 presentations (Roanoke County EDA, Onward New River Valley’s convening of LEDO’s, and the Leadership New River Valley program from the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce). These outreach presentations celebrated the impacts of GO Virginia projects that have been funded in each sub-region, and shared ways to learn more about funding opportunities through GO Virginia.



*GOVA Region 2 council members Janice Crawford and Luke Towles shared information about the GOVA Region 2 program in March 2023 with the Bedford Town and County Economic Development Authorities.*

**Region 2 Small & Rural Convening:** Under the direction of the Region 2 Council, support staff worked with the Central Virginia Planning District Commission, the New River Valley Area Commission, and the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Highlands Regional Commission to host an in-person gathering for small and rural localities. 18 people attended (excluding Region 2 support staff). This gathering was an intentional opportunity to identify projects that multiple localities were interested in pursuing, share beneficial case studies of creative partnerships for projects in rural communities in Region 2 and beyond, and share with localities how and when to engage with GO Virginia. Access to childcare, “the future of work” (in-person/ remote/ hybrid), sites and buildings, entrepreneurship, and talent/workforce pipelines were all identified as common priorities. After this meeting, two localities in attendance submitted first-time GO Virginia applications (Appomattox and Montgomery counties).



*Economic developers from small and rural communities in Region 2 met in Roanoke on May 8, 2023 to connect with one another and discuss challenges and opportunities.*

# Project Pipeline

1. Randolph College STEM Leaders | Randolph College
2. Clean Tech for Advanced Manufacturing | Pulaski County
3. Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers Implementation | Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers
4. Makerspace in Roanoke | Hacksburg
5. Plan for LYH Regional NITCH (Nuclear Industry Technology Commercialization Hub) | Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance
6. Career Navigator Program| Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance
7. Data Science Accelerator PProgram/ Local Government Data Project | Virginia Tech Business Information Technology
8. Manufacturing Training Gap – Roanoke | Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission



# Council Members

Name	Company/Agency
Amos, Eddie, Dr., <i>Chair</i>	GE Digital (Retired)
Dalton, Beverley, Vice-Chair	English Construction
Austin, Michelle	Bank of Botetourt
Bishop, Nathaniel, Dr.	Carilion Clinic
Capps, John, Dr.	Central Virginia Community College
Craig, Kenneth	Liberty University
Crawford, Janice	Framatome, Inc.
Czelusniak, Whitney	American Electric Power (AEP)
Davis, Sandy	BCR Property Management (Retired)
Denham, Paul	Southern Air Inc.
Feldmann, Greg	Skyline Capital
Friedlander, Michael, Dr.	Fralin Biomedical Research Institute
Halliwill, Don	Carilion Clinic
Hamlar, Mike	Hamlar-Curtis Funeral Home
Hatcher, Vince	Hollingsworth & Vose Company
Huber, Patricia, Dr.	New River Community College
Johnson, Bif	Hurt & Proffitt
Kemper, Fourd	Woods Rogers Attorneys at Law
Muscatello, Marty	MM Consulting
Payne, Kimball	The Berkley Group
Petrine, Debbie	Commonwealth Care of Roanoke
Putney, John	Bedford County
Sebring, Amy	Virginia Tech
Smoot, Ray, Dr.	Virginia Tech Foundation (Retired)
Towles, Luke	Pinnacle Financial Partners
Underwood, Cathy	Branch Builds
Vincent, Richmond	Goodwill of the Valleys
Wright, Jacob	Alleghany Highlands School Board/Merry Go Round Farms
Yalung, Justin	IV Labs

# Support Organization

Support staff, CECE and CPE:		
<b>John Provo</b> , Executive Director	Program manager	jprovo@vt.edu
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<b>Alyssa McKenney</b> , Contracts Program Specialist	Contracts management	alyssa1@vt.edu
<b>Tracie Smith</b> , Fiscal Specialist	Accounting	sweeneyt@vt.edu
<b>Scott Tate</b> , Associate Director for Community Innovation	Applicant technical assistance	atate1@vt.edu
<b>Elli Travis</b> , Senior Economic Development Specialist	Project and program evaluation	emtravis@vt.edu
<b>Sarah Lyon-Hill</b> , Associate Director for Research Development	Planning and research	sarahlh@vt.edu

GO Virginia Region 2 website: <https://cece.vt.edu/GOVAR2.html>

Database of funded GO Virginia Region 2 projects: <https://cece.vt.edu/GOVAR2/GOVirginiaFundedProjects.html>

Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement website: <https://cece.vt.edu/>



# References

Cover page, photo 1: Peterson, Don. *Bedford Economic Development Authority Chairman Jonathan Buttram and town Community Development Director Mary Zirkle at the former Winoa USA plant.* 30 July 2023. Virginia Business.

Cover page, photo 2: Montgomery County, VA Public Information. *Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II site.* n.d.

Cover page, photo 3: Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council. *Student participating in pitch competition during Game Changer Week.* 6 Sept. 2023.

Page 10, photo: Provo, John. *Region 2 Council members speak about GO Virginia program in Bedford.* 2 March 2023. Virginia Tech.

Page 11, photo: Provo, John. *Participants discuss challenges and opportunities at the Small & Rural Convening.* 8 May 2023. Virginia Tech.

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