



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

GO Virginia Region 2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 14, 2023

RICHMOND—The GO Virginia State Board announced its approval of three new Region 2 projects aimed at growing the regional economy. Region 2 consists of the cities of Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem; and the counties of Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

Board Approved Projects:

Bedford Regional Metal Workforce Retention Center (Town of Bedford Economic Development Authority)

The Bedford Regional Metal Workforce Retention Center project will repurpose a 60,000 square foot former steel shot foundry into a Central and Southwest Virginia regional workforce development center focused on metal fabrication skills training. The funding will be used to procure a consultant team to develop a master plan strategy for how to connect metal-working businesses that need targeted skills training with educators in metal fabrication skills. This project will further the work of a previous GO Virginia award to Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) to create a Regional Career and Technical Education Academy. The GO Virginia board approved a total of \$99,900 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging \$201,000 in non-state sources.

“Economic development staff and metal companies consistently cite difficulties in retaining employees and attracting skilled workers from the local labor pool, both indicators of the need for additional regional training resources,” said Jonathan Buttram, chairman of the Town of Bedford Economic Development Authority. “This project will remove the burden from employers to provide industry specific training and centralize the need for that training into a dedicated facility, giving people hands-on experience with specific machines and applications.”

Career Acceleration Program (Beacon of Hope)

The Career Acceleration Program will work to increase the career capacity of the region by retaining young workers graduating high school. Project goals also include reconnecting with individuals who have paused their educational journeys and engaging with two-generation households, where parent and children are prime age workers. The project will also create a long-term career case management system that allows workers to continuously learn and prepare for new job opportunities. The project builds on a previous GO Virginia planning grant, which helped Beacon of Hope develop a playbook for implementing Future Centers – resource hubs in schools that assist students with college and career preparation – across Region 2. The GO Virginia board approved a total of \$540,000 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging \$585,000 in non-state sources.

“Lynchburg Beacon of Hope combines a grassroots effort with regional partnerships, strong K-12 programming, and relationships with the three public school systems and five regionally accredited colleges and universities in the Lynchburg region,” said Laura Hamilton, executive director of Lynchburg Beacon of Hope. “This GO Virginia implementation grant will broaden our scope of impact, providing more data to broaden our reach here in Region 2 and as a demonstration program for communities nationally. Lynchburg Beacon of Hope is currently working alongside

dozens of Region 2 employers through our Future Centers, experiential programs, and career access programming to create a pipeline of well-prepared, well-credentialed young people interested in keeping and growing their talents here in Central Virginia.”

LRBA Center of Entrepreneurship (Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance)

The Center of Entrepreneurship will serve as an anchor and catalyst for the Greater Lynchburg 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 into the marketplace. The project will provide direct assistance to entrepreneurs; increase the available support space for targeted startups by 5,000 square feet and access to capital by up to \$400,000; and offer 10-12 training and business development events to 200 attendees each year. The GO Virginia board approved a total of \$240,192 in state funds for the project, which is leveraging \$199,035 in non-state sources.

“This project will fulfill the need of a physical gathering place for entrepreneurs, giving start-ups and businesses a place to connect with one each other and receive support. We look forward to increasing training for entrepreneurs and providing them with the resources they need to further develop their businesses,” said Megan Lucas, CEO of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance.

GO Virginia is a statewide initiative designed to encourage Virginia’s economic growth through the creation of high-wage jobs. Virginia Tech’s Center for Economic and Community Engagement serves as Region 2’s support organization. For more information, please contact John Provo, jprovo@vt.edu.



OUTREACH & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
VIRGINIA TECH