



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

GO Virginia Region 2

GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting

April 15, 2026, 1:00PM-3:00PM

Fralin Biomedical Research Institute

4 Riverside Circle, Roanoke, VA 24016; G101A/B

[Virtual Link](#)

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|-------|--|-----------------|
| I. | Opening (1:00-1:10) | Chairman Denham |
| | a. Roll Call | |
| II. | Project Reports (1:10-1:20) | Emmalee Wagner |
| | a. Financial Reports | |
| | b. Stoplight Report | |
| | c. Proposal Updates | |
| III. | Project Proposals (1:20-1:50) | Jemma Sabokrouh |
| | a. Sweet Briar College Thermal Engineering Program Expansion | |
| | b. NRV Regional Commission GOTEC Expansion in Region 2 & 3 | |
| IV. | Virginia AI Landscape Assessment (1:50-2:15) | Andrew Sinclair |
| V. | Regional Council Committee Update (2:15-2:25) | Justin Yalung |
| VI. | Council Business (2:25-2:45) | Chairman Denham |
| | a. February 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes | |
| | b. Membership | |
| | c. Executive Committee Report | |
| VII. | Program Report (2:45-3:00) | Jemma Sabokrouh |
| | a. Program Updates | |
| | b. FY27-28 Capacity Building Budget | |
| | c. Stories of Impact | Barb Reibsamen |
| VIII. | Closing | Chairman Denham |
| | a. Adjournment | |

Next Council Meeting: August 5, 2026 (Virtual)

Public comments are welcome in writing. Please submit to Emmalee Wagner, emmaleewagner@vt.edu, by 4/14/2026 at 1:00 p.m.

FY26 Per Capita Projects

FY26 Allocation	\$1,506,951.00
FY25 Remaining Balance Transferred to FY26	\$467,240.97
Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance Regional Talent Portal	-\$99,999.00
VTTI D2D Workforce Pathways Plan for ACE Technology	-\$99,999.00
Vector Space, Robotics Facility Planning, Lynchburg Region	-\$97,200.00
Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center - Project RISE	-\$648,000.00
Randolph College Mechanical Engineering Program Expansion in Greater Lynchburg	-\$686,340.00
Project Returns	\$65,722.20
FY26 Remaining Balance	\$408,376.17

FY 26 Capacity Building (Support)

FY26 Allocation	\$250,000.00
FY26 Disbursement	-\$250,000.00
Current Balance	\$0.00

FY26 Statewide Competitive and HBRI Funded Projects

BRIC Industry Scale-Up Plan for Regions 2 and 3	-\$250,000.00	<i>Statewide Competitive</i>
SBDC Business Preparedness Program NRV	-\$71,166.61	<i>Helene Business Recovery Initiative</i>
NRVRC AM2 Initiative to Grow Advanced Manufacturing Regions 2 &3	-\$4,230,160.00	<i>Statewide Competitive</i>

Applications Under Consideration

Sweet Briar College Thermal Systems Engineering Expansion	-\$139,776.96
Total	-\$139,776.96
Per Capita Balance if All Applications Approved	\$268,599.21

FY26 Planning Cap

	\$250,000.00
<i>Planning projects approved</i>	\$197,199.00
<i>Percentage of planning cap</i>	79%
<i>Planning funds remaining</i>	\$52,801.00

Current Project Details										
Project Name	Funding Type & FY	Start Date	End Date	GOVA Funding Approved	GOVA Drawn Down to date	GOVA Funds Remaining	Match Funding	Match Reported to Date	Match Funds Remaining	Notes
Center for Entrepreneurship	Per Capita (FY22)	3/14/2023	3/14/2027	\$240,192.00	\$103,403.97	\$136,788.03	\$187,035.00	\$82,098.69	\$104,936.31	No cost contract extension executed, new end date 3/14/2027
Industry 4.0 for the ACE Workforce	Per Capita (FY23)	3/1/2023	12/31/2025	\$500,000.00	\$267,703.80	\$232,296.20	\$251,300.00	\$266,707.13	\$0.00	Fiscal closeout has been submitted
Lynchburg Beacon of Hope Career Acceleration Program	Per Capita (FY23)	8/1/2023	3/1/2026	\$540,000.00	\$357,466.39	\$182,533.61	\$352,200.00	\$219,069.87	\$133,130.13	
Falling Branch Corporate Park Regional Site Development	Per Capita (FY23)	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	\$324,000.00	\$324,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,810,765.60	\$2,261,022.06	\$549,743.54	
Strengthening Entrepreneurs' Impact	Per Capita (FY23)	12/1/2023	8/30/2026	\$577,800.00	\$415,841.51	\$161,958.49	\$288,900.00	\$263,449.11	\$25,450.89	
ACA Classical & CTE Academy Welding	Per Capita (FY24)	7/1/2024	7/1/2027	\$565,000.00	\$528,824.14	\$36,175.86	\$318,259.00	\$390,433.87	\$0.00	
Developing IT & Cybersecurity Certification Pipeline (ITCCP)	Per Capita (FY24)	7/1/2024	7/1/2026	\$202,872.00	\$75,379.69	\$127,492.31	\$116,863.00	\$62,149.18	\$54,713.82	
Randolph College Engineering	Per Capita (FY24)	7/1/2024	7/1/2026	\$367,000.00	\$226,487.99	\$140,512.01	\$379,784.00	\$324,099.88	\$55,684.12	
Project VITAL	Per Capita (FY24) & Statewide Competitive	1/1/2025	1/1/2028	\$4,987,029.00	\$697,304.72	\$4,289,724.28	\$2,517,443.16	\$351,814.47	\$2,165,628.69	
GOTEC Launch in the New River Valley and Roanoke County	Per Capita (FY25)	7/1/2025	7/1/2027	\$994,213.00	\$145,723.39	\$848,489.61	\$518,956.00	\$83,985.15	\$434,970.85	
NRVRC Site Advancement Strategy 2025	Per Capita (FY25)	8/15/2025	8/14/2026	\$94,400.00	\$12,807.44	\$81,592.56	\$108,479.00	\$38,000.00	\$70,479.00	
Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance Regional Talent Portal	Per Capita (FY26)	10/1/2025	9/30/2027	\$99,999.00	\$0.00	\$99,999.00	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00	
VTTI D2D Workforce Pathways Plan for ACE Technology	Per Capita (FY26)	11/15/2025	11/14/2026	\$99,999.00	\$0.00	\$99,999.00	\$57,945.00	\$0.00	\$57,945.00	
Vector Space Robotics Program Feasibility Study for LYH	Per Capita (FY26)	11/5/2025	11/4/2026	\$97,200.00	\$0.00	\$97,200.00	\$48,750.00	\$0.00	\$48,750.00	
VTCRC - Project RISE	Per Capita (FY26)	12/9/2025	12/8/2027	\$648,000.00	\$0.00	\$648,000.00	\$633,555.00	\$0.00	\$633,555.00	Contract Executed 3/20/2026
SBDC Business Preparedness Program - New River Valley	HBRI (FY26)	1/12/2026	1/11/2028	\$71,155.61	\$0.00	\$71,155.61	\$36,278.96	\$0.00	\$36,278.96	Contract Executed 3/3/2026
Randolph College Mechanical Engineering Program Expansion	Per Capita (FY26)			\$686,340.00	\$0.00	\$686,340.00	\$394,249.17	\$0.00	\$394,249.17	Contracting in Process
NRVRC AM2 Initiative to Grow Advanced Manufacturing Regions 2 & 3	Statewide Competitive (FY26)			\$4,230,160.00	\$0.00	\$4,230,160.00	\$1,646,208.16	\$0.00	\$1,646,208.16	Contracting in Process

Project Status Summary

Project Type & FY	GOVA Funding Approved	GOVA Drawn Down to date	GOVA Funds Remaining	Match Funding	Match Drawn Down	Match Funds Remaining	Admin Fee	Admin Fee Draw Down	Admin Fee Remaining
Per Capita FY18 Projects:	\$1,115,382.03	\$1,086,718.14	\$0.00	\$3,252,380.71	\$2,901,110.76	\$353,216.13			
Per Capita FY19 Projects:	\$1,197,486.00	\$1,058,036.14	\$0.00	\$1,732,722.00	\$1,597,744.44	\$148,098.04			
Per Capita FY20 Projects:	\$1,782,567.00	\$1,622,794.44	\$0.00	\$1,272,290.00	\$1,171,367.18	\$141,145.26	\$27,162.00	\$27,162.00	\$0.00
ERR FY20 Projects:	\$1,110,700.00	\$1,109,141.94	\$0.00	\$566,610.00	\$570,743.57	\$0.00	\$23,598.00	\$23,083.48	\$514.52
Per Capita FY21 Projects:	\$844,157.00	\$794,295.95	\$0.00	\$695,042.00	\$669,979.51	\$25,062.49	\$62,530.00	\$58,836.99	\$3,693.01
Per Capita FY22 Projects:	\$1,442,743.00	\$1,245,161.60	\$197,581.39	\$1,080,813.00	\$1,137,442.88	\$165,678.79	\$105,369.00	\$90,730.39	\$14,638.61
Per Capita FY23 Projects:	\$2,108,467.00	\$1,531,678.70	\$576,788.30	\$3,799,832.37	\$3,105,412.19	\$709,827.31	\$156,182.00	\$113,456.96	\$42,725.04
Per Capita FY24 Projects:	\$1,274,231.00	\$940,499.03	\$333,731.97	\$954,934.40	\$884,509.48	\$142,599.79	\$92,350.19	\$68,461.85	\$23,888.34
TPI FY24 Projects:	\$250,000.00	\$196,940.02	\$53,059.98	\$125,029.00	\$106,346.28	\$18,682.72	\$20,000.00	\$14,588.15	\$5,411.85
Statewide Competitive Projects FY24:	\$4,987,029.00	\$697,304.72	\$4,289,724.28	\$2,517,443.16	\$351,814.47	\$2,165,628.69	\$121,634.85	\$16,612.80	\$105,022.05
Per Capita FY25 Projects:	\$1,238,613.00	\$308,530.83	\$930,082.17	\$677,435.00	\$171,985.15	\$505,449.85	\$70,083.00	\$16,604.19	\$53,478.81
Per Capita FY26 Projects:	\$1,631,538.00	\$0.00	\$1,631,538.00	\$1,184,499.17	\$0.00	\$1,184,499.17	\$120,854.00	\$0.00	\$120,854.00
HBRI FY26 Projects:	\$71,155.61	\$0.00	\$71,155.61	\$36,278.96	\$0.00	\$36,278.96	\$5,270.80	\$0.00	\$5,270.80
Statewide Competitive Projects FY26:	\$4,230,160.00	\$0.00	\$4,230,160.00	\$1,646,208.16	\$0.00	\$1,646,208.16	\$182,160.00	\$0.00	\$182,160.00
TOTAL:	\$23,284,228.64	\$10,591,101.51	\$12,313,821.70	\$19,541,517.93	\$12,668,455.91	\$7,242,375.36	\$987,193.84	\$429,536.81	\$557,657.03

GO Virginia Region 2 Quarterly Report

Q1: January - March 2026

Program to Date Metrics

Total Projects Funded	Totals Funds Allocated	Jobs Created/Placed	Matching Funds Allocated
64 (45 Projects Completed)	\$23,774,736	976	\$22,024,894

Stoplight Report Project Status Key

Project completed quarterly milestone(s) and is on track to complete outcomes by contracted end date.
Project did not complete one or more quarterly milestone(s) but has a plan in place to complete outcomes by contracted end date.
Project did not complete one or more quarterly milestone(s) and a plan for completing outcomes by contracted end date is not in place.

Project Status, Details, GOVA Funds	Achieved/Committed Outcomes	Q1 Reporting from Staff
ACA Classical & CTE Institute Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 6/30/24 - 6/30/27* \$565,000	12/54 Student Trained 21/70 Credentials Awarded	0 of 2 milestones met. Installation of 2nd equipment tranche is not complete; <i>expected in a couple weeks.</i> CVCC workforce classes not held this semester; <i>will start in Fall 2026.</i>
Educating Engineers for the Region 2 Workforce Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 7/01/24 - 7/01/26 \$367,000	0/40 Students Trained 25/40 Internships Created	0 of 1 milestone met. "Facilitate internship placements for half of participating students." <i>Confirmation of student internship placements will not be available until May.</i> Professors trained and all robotic equipment installed. Student training (+certification) will start AY26-27.
Falling Branch Corporate Park Site Development <i>Implementation</i> 7/01/23 - 6/30/26* \$324,000	0/35 Acres Elevated from Tier 4 to Tier 5 on VBRSP Scale 0/1,004 feet of sewer line constructed 2,800/2,800 feet of waterline constructed	0 of 1 milestone met. Final phase of construction has not begun. <i>Bid release delayed by Town review; bid released 3/24/26.</i>
GOTEC Launch in NRV and Roanoke County Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 7/01/25 - 7/01/27 \$994,213	468/1,136 People Trained 1/1 Program Implemented	0 of 1 milestone met. Reporting delays from IALR and some partner school districts have extended the timeline for finalizing quarterly metrics. 100% of the project equipment received and inventoried. The GO TEC program is operational and active across all six designated partner sites.
LRBA Center for Entrepreneurship Startup Ecosystem <i>Implementation</i> 3/14/23 - 3/14/27* \$240,192	8/42 Jobs Created 41/20 Businesses Served \$604K/\$400K Capital Raised	2 of 4 milestones met. 1 - 2 Development events not held. <i>Recruiting now for tech providers/mentors to host.</i> 1- 2 issues of Ventur Magazine not published. <i>Roadblocks to hiring someone willing to publish.</i>
LRBA Say YES to LYH Talent Portal Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 10/01/25 - 9/30/27 \$99,999	0/50 Jobs Created 0/20 New Businesses Served	3 of 4 milestones met. Launch of a working website prototype for internal testing was not completed. <i>Web developer anticipates June delivery.</i>

Project Status, Details, GOVA Funds	Achieved/Committed Outcomes	Q1 Update from Subgrantee
Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor Cluster Scale Up <i>Statewide Planning</i> 1/01/26 - 12/31/26 \$250,000	Contracted Deliverable: Vision 2050 Playbook	<i>Subgrantee reports to Region 3 in mid-April. Project reports will be delayed by one quarter.</i>
Developing IT and Cybersecurity Certification Pipeline Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 7/01/24 - 7/01/26 \$202,872	146/104 Credentials Awarded 7/15 Businesses Served	Staff attended Spring Radford University Career Fair to share the IT Talent Connector Program and Spring Summit and the availability of the Certification Center. An employer webinar was held on February 24th to inform employers about the available resources. The Spring Talent Connect Summit is scheduled for April 7th. Recruitment of employers and registration of students in underway.
Lynchburg Career Accelerator Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 7/31/23 - 3/01/26* \$540,000	264/112 Internships Completed 77/44 Certificates Awarded 61/24 Businesses Served Playbook for Opportunity Youth Playbook for Promise Pausers Playbook for 2Gen Populations	All 3 Playbooks completed. Online tool development finalized and project team is onboarding partners to digital platform. Project is working through closeout process.
NRV Regional Commission Sites Advancement Strategy Site Development <i>Planning</i> 8/15/25 - 8/14/26 \$94,400	Contracted Deliverables: 6 Updated Site Inventory Reports 6 One Page Site Reports 1 Roadmap Report 1 Site Selection Investment Report	Contract finalized with project consultant. Meetings held with consultant and participating LEDOs to confirm project expectations, review selected sites, and outline next steps. Site visits conducted across all participating localities, providing on-the-ground context to supplement previously compiled site information.
Project RISE Entrepreneurship & Innovation <i>Implementation</i> 12/09/25 - 12/08/27 \$648,000	0/35 Jobs Created 1/10 New Businesses Created 7/40 Businesses Served 6/40 New Mentors Providing Assistance 0/20 Patents Filed 0/10 Patents Awarded	Construction of the new ERC began this quarter. The first facilitated workshop, Idea lab, was held on January 25th. Program Operations manager was hired in February.
Project VITAL Cluster Scale Up <i>Statewide Implementation</i> 1/01/25 - 1/01/28 \$4,987,029	16/42 Employees Upskilled 21/406 Jobs Created/Filled 49/100 Businesses Served 13/55 Entrepreneurs Engaged 5/15 Mentors Engaged \$18M/\$50M Capital Raised	18 of 20 milestones met. Human Factors Lab (HFL) Manager staffing process nearly complete and requisition process for HFL Specialist will begin next quarter. Partners continued entrepreneur programming, regulatory and capital support, Human Factors Lab development, and expanded commercialization efforts. Workforce and K-12 biotech outreach grew, and Radford launched an Applied Biotechnology program.
SBDC Business Preparedness NRV Helene Business Recovery Initiative <i>Implementation</i> 1/12/26 - 1/11/28 \$71,156	0/1 New Program Implemented 0/50 Businesses Served 0/2 New Mentors Providing Assistance	All start-up milestones for the Helene Business Recovery Initiative completed. The "Ready for Anything" curriculum developed. Outreach and recruitment efforts initiated.
Strengthening Entrepreneurs Impact Start Up Ecosystem <i>Implementation</i> 12/01/23 - 8/30/26* \$577,800	74/70 Jobs Created/Filled 32/35 Existing Businesses Expanded 7/8 New Businesses Created 77/58 Businesses Served 149/58 Entrepreneurs Engaged 69/50 Mentors Engaged	RAMP hosted a Pitch & Polich Clinic, prepared the upcoming ON Ramp cohort, expanded outreach, ran workshops, launched an Exit RAMP cohort, and partnered with VIPC and VVP on funding and entrepreneurship events to support regional startups.
Vector Space Robotics Facility Planning Workforce Development <i>Planning</i> 11/05/25 - 11/04/26 \$97,200	Contracted Deliverable: 1 Feasibility study	Planning Committee hosted first meeting. Site visits to robotics events took place. Developed and distributed stakeholder survey to rural VA teams.

* DHCD awarded no-cost contract extension Additional project information is available upon request. emmaleewagner@vt.edu

VTI Workforce Pathways Plan for ACE Technology Workforce Development <i>Planning</i> 11/15/25 - 11/14/26 \$99,999	Contracted Deliverable: 1 Strategic plan for implementation	The research team completed the literature and program scan. A concept document, outreach materials, and interview questions were developed for stakeholder interview outreach.
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Q1 Closed Project Details	Final Outcomes	Closeout Reporting from Subgrantee
Industry 4.0 for the Automated- Connected- Electrified (ACE) Workforce Workforce Development <i>Implementation</i> 2/28/23 - 12/31/25* \$500,000	48/35 Businesses Served 140/530 Students Trained	The ACE Workforce project delivered Industry 4.0 training, technology assessments, and student pipeline development while building strong regional partnerships. It raised awareness of Industry 4.0 workforce needs, helped companies begin technology adoption, engaged 99 partners, and developed asynchronous trainings to maintain participation when industry engagement was impacted by shifting federal policies. <i>Project returned \$232,296 to Region 2 available funding.</i>

* DHCD awarded no-cost contract extension Additional project information is available upon request. emmaleewagner@vt.edu

Sweet Briar College Thermal Engineering Program Expansion in Greater Lynchburg



Applicant: Sweet Briar College
Participating Localities: Amherst County (cash), Town of Amherst (cash), Campbell County (cash & in kind)
Targeted Industries: Manufacturing for Transportation, Energy & Autonomy; IT, Engineering Services & Emerging Technology
Investment Strategy: Workforce Development
Type of Project: Implementation

Goal: Support the talent pipeline by training engineers that are highly skilled in the principles, analysis, and operations of thermal systems.

Project Description: Sweet Briar College requests funding to support the expansion of its thermal engineering program to strengthen the talent pipeline with engineers prepared to work in the nuclear, refrigeration, and associated manufacturing industries.

This project will expand an existing thermal fluids course into two sequential courses to offer thorough, high-quality training in fluid mechanics, thermodynamics, and heat transfer. Training students across all these complex skills will result in work-ready talent with hands-on experience in addition to the knowledge required to apply them upon graduation. In addition to expanding this course, Sweet Briar will have renovated lab space and equipment that will allow for real-world application and practice. Students in the program will also participate in a seminar series, capstone projects, and industry tours hosted by regional companies to support talent retention in the region.

Committed Outcomes
3 Job Placements
15 Students Trained
7 Interns Placed

Budget	
GO Virginia Request	\$139,777
<i>Local Match</i>	\$23,000
Total Matching Funds	\$71,530
Additional Leverage	--
Total Project Budget	\$211,307

Funding Details: GO Virginia funds will be used for **contract services** needed for the laboratory renovation, to purchase **equipment** (lab-scale power plant and refrigeration trainer), and **salaries** for a mechanical technician and Sweet Briar faculty for grant administration.

Matching funds are contributed by Amherst County Board of Supervisors, Amherst County Economic Development Authority, Town of Amherst, Campbell County Economic Development Authority, Framatome, BWXT, Aerofin, and Sweet Briar College. Matching funds will be used for the equipment named above, salaries for Sweet Briar faculty for course development & grant administration, contract services for laboratory renovation, and contributions to support the seminar series, job shadowing, industry tours, and service on the project advisory board.

Program Requirements	
\$2:1 Match	Yes
Industry Demand	Yes
Alignment with G&D Plan	Yes
Locality Participation/Match	Yes

Application Review Summary:

This project proposal was reviewed by Amy Sebring, GO Virginia Region 2 Council; Cheryl Valentine, GENEDGE; and Jemma Sabokrouh, GO Virginia Region 2 staff.

Reviewer Feedback:

Economic Impact

- The focus on Virginia-based students and employers supports talent retention in Region 2.
- Lab investments and capstone projects ensure job-ready skills.
- Small cohort size (15 students) may limit impact. What strategies exist to grow enrollment and expand program impact?
- Is there any data on the growth, trends, or number of unfilled positions specifically for engineers with this type of expertise?

Regional Collaboration

- High levels of participation from local government entities.
- Clear and significant support, partnership, and collaboration from academic, industry, local government, and economic development partners through cash, in-kind support and student opportunities.
- The program has been developed with direct input from employers.

Project Readiness

- Applicant demonstrates project readiness with evidence of meetings and coordination with multiple entities and attending local government meetings to share the project.
- Significant cash match contributions speak to project readiness as well as regional support, allowing equipment purchases to begin immediately upon award.
- Applicant demonstrates readiness by providing detailed cost estimates from contractors and manufacturers for the equipment and services needed for the program.

Sustainability

- This program presents a unique opportunity for specialized training in thermal fluids that is not available elsewhere.
- Ongoing resources needed beyond the start-up phase are fairly minimal. Sweet Briar seems prepared to sustain the project once it is off the ground.



New River Valley Regional Commission GOTEC Expansion in Regions 2&3

Applicant: New River Valley Regional Commission

Participating Localities: Giles County Public Schools (in kind), Amherst County Public Schools (in kind), Amelia County Public Schools (in kind), Floyd County Public Schools (in kind), Montgomery County Public Schools (in kind), Roanoke County Public Schools (in kind)

Targeted Industries: Advanced Materials Manufacturing; Manufacturing for Transportation, Energy & Autonomy

Investment Strategy: Workforce Development

Type of Project: Competitive (single region)

Goal: Support the talent pipeline for manufacturing, engineering, and related fields across regions 2 and 3 by introducing skills, concepts and career pathways to students at the middle school level through GOTEC's hands-on curriculum.

Project Description: This project will introduce 11 new GOTEC Career Connections labs across Amherst, Amelia, Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Roanoke County Public Schools.

Program Requirements	
\$2:1 Match	Yes
Industry Demand	Yes
Alignment with G&D Plan	Yes
Locality Participation/Match	Yes

Committed Outcomes
4,300 People Trained
1 New Program Implemented

Budget	
GO Virginia Request	\$2,295,384
Total Matching Funds	\$1,508,738
<i>Local Match</i>	\$1,444,738
Additional Leverage	-
Total Project Budget	\$3,804,122

Funding Details: GO Virginia funds will be used to purchase equipment for 11 GOTEC Career Connections Labs, grant administration for the NRV Regional Commission, and contract services for Montgomery County Public Schools to provide coordination and implementation support across each participating school district.

Match contributions are provided by each participating school district in teacher salaries, one robotics kit from Montgomery County Public Schools, and GOTEC program administration from the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR).

Virginia AI Landscape Assessment

Executive Summary

Economic Leadership, LLC was engaged by the Virginia Chamber Foundation with financial and project related support from GO Virginia to conduct an artificial intelligence (AI) landscape assessment across the Commonwealth. Through surveys, focus groups and interviews in all nine GO Virginia regions, a review of current literature, and data forecasting, this study endeavors to understand the current climate for AI in the Commonwealth and predict potential workplace and workforce impacts.

Using the data and information collected, a series of actionable recommendations has been developed to put the Commonwealth in the best position to mitigate AI impacts and to capitalize on AI-related opportunities over the next few years and to provide a foundation for more detailed workforce assessments at the regional level that will be needed to prepare Virginia workers for the AI impacts that are expected.

Understanding AI and Potential Impacts

Use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools and software is growing faster than any new technology ever introduced. ChatGPT alone reports 800 million users each week and over 2.5 billion queries per day. Recently, Walmart's CEO was quoted in the Wall Street Journal as saying, "Maybe there's a job in the world that AI won't change

It is widely expected that the deployment of AI tools and agents will change many jobs as they exist today, make some jobs obsolete, and create new types of jobs. But the extent to which AI will affect specific occupations and individual positions varies widely based on the type of tasks associated with the job.

Researchers and organizations such as McKinsey & Company, Indeed.com's Hiring Lab, Goldman Sachs and the World Economic Forum have all published studies within the last two years indicating somewhere between 20-30 percent of U.S. occupations could be subject to automation within next 5 years.

Thus far, most studies are not reporting widespread displacement of workers due to AI. While we have yet to see major changes in hiring or industry disruptions due to AI in Virginia, the general consensus is that AI tools have begun to change hiring practices and job requirements for certain occupations and AI will significantly impact certain industries much more than others within the next two to five years.

AI Use and Perspectives in Virginia

Virginians are using AI at rates greater than most other states. ChatGPT's parent company, OpenAI reported in July 2025 that Virginia had the highest quarter-over-quarter growth in use of ChatGPT

among all states. AI use by Virginia businesses has more than doubled since the U.S. Census Bureau began surveying businesses bi-weekly in September 2023.

As part of the Landscape Assessment, AI-related feedback was collected from 520 attendees at the Virginia Chamber of Commerce’s Blueprint Tour stops held throughout the nine GO Virginia regions:

- A very high percentage (83.7 percent) of Blueprint Tour attendees represented organizations that have begun deploying AI or that are considering deploying AI
- Less than one-fifth of respondents indicated that their firm had adjusted hiring practices due to AI and another one-fifth were unsure
- Highlighting an area of focus for additional resources, only 27 percent of respondents indicated that AI training resources were readily available in their region

Additionally, an online survey and 38 employer interviews were conducted to obtain further information about AI use and adoption across the Commonwealth. Eight themes that emerged from the survey and interviews include:

- The opportunities and impacts related to AI in Virginia are just beginning to come into focus
- Workers need to be “AI literate” and need clarity (and encouragement) on AI use in the workplace
- Generative AI (GenAI) is “next level AI” and requires a different set of workforce skill sets than previous AI
- A high likelihood that jobs will change, some jobs will disappear, and new jobs will be created
- The training resources are not fully in place today and the ones that are will be challenged to respond to the volume of demand and pace of technological change
- AI offers huge benefits for businesses, but AI deployment needs to be strategic and integrated to be most successful
- Virginia has a unique opportunity to benefit from AI that many other states do not (if the infrastructure is there to support)
- Finding the right tone of policy and regulatory engagement for AI will be an important determinant of how effectively it is utilized

Virginia AI Asset Mapping

In July 2025, there were 8,940 unique job postings in Virginia that mentioned AI in the job description and since 2022, about 6,350 different employers have competed in the state for AI talent. The jobs posting data also shows that Region 7 (Northern Virginia) has the highest concentration of employers looking for AI talent.

To encourage the use of AI in education for teaching and learning, in January 2024, Governor Youngkin issued Executive Order 30 on Artificial Intelligence, which put forward the official *Guidelines for AI Integration Throughout Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia*. Key principles from this order

include: a requirement to ensure AI integration is done ethically and safely and a focus on harnessing AI to empower students, enabling more personalized and adaptive learning experiences.

Providing AI literacy for incumbent workers at the scale and volume required will involve both traditional workforce training partners and new training resources and partners. As demonstrated in surveys and interviews, many employers reported that sufficient training capacity is not available and/or it is not apparent how to access training resources in their region.

In addition to large industries and employers, Virginia's economy is also driven by the more than 850,000 businesses with fewer than 250 employees located throughout the Commonwealth. Targeting training resources to help small and mid-sized businesses will need to be a key priority to ensure they are able to capitalize on AI productivity and new product development opportunities the same way large firms are beginning to benefit.

Efforts to train students in the field of AI are somewhat limited in Virginia right now. At this time there are few AI-related degree or certificate programs offered at Virginia community colleges and the number of AI degree programs at Virginia's four-year colleges and universities is very limited with only Hampton University and Marymount University offering bachelor's degrees in Artificial Intelligence and George Mason offering a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence Degree.

Despite the limited number of AI degree programs, the ability of Virginia colleges and universities to train tech talent has been a key factor in Commonwealth becoming a hub for technology businesses. The number of certificates and degrees offered and the volume of graduates in programs such as Data Science, Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Computer and Information Science and other related fields will help support the technology workforce needs of AI firms in Virginia.

Virginia's data centers, fiber connectivity, concentration of internet and digital firms and its tech-trained workforce are factors that should help grow and attract AI-related firms. To be successful as a hub for AI businesses, infrastructure such as available and affordable power, building sites, targeted business incentives and robust technology workforce training programs are essential.

Forecasting AI Impacts in the Commonwealth

Section 4 of the Virginia AI Landscape Assessment report includes forecasts of potential impacts of AI on jobs and industries in Virginia. Region-specific forecasts are also included in Appendix B of the report. Some of the key findings include:

- Several studies indicate that Virginia is projected to be among the top 5-10 states in the number of jobs "exposed" or "highly exposed" to impacts of AI
- As many as 1.5 million jobs (about 35 percent of all jobs) in Virginia could be impacted in some way by AI-related changes
- The jobs of nearly 500,000 young workers (ages 21-35) across the Commonwealth are likely to be exposed to AI-related impacts and changes

- AI's impact is most likely to be felt in larger and more densely populated metro areas as well as in areas with higher educational attainment levels
- Forecasted AI related impacts range from 29 percent of jobs in GO Virginia's Region 3 to 39 percent of jobs in GO Virginia's Region 7
- Among the top occupations in Virginia expected to be exposed to AI impacts are software developers, general and operations managers, customer service representatives, and clerical workers
- From an industry perspective, almost 58 percent of jobs in finance and insurance are projected to be exposed to AI impacts
- Other industries including professional services, information, and management all have an exposure share of over half of their workforce.

Summary of Recommendations

Information gathered as part of the landscape assessment process and analysis conducted on potential and likely impacts yielded the following five key workforce and workplace objectives to ensure Virginia workers and businesses are competitive in the AI era:

- Future workers need AI familiarity and data literacy
- Incumbent workers need AI training, policy and use clarity and reskilling as their jobs change
- Displaced workers need re-employment training and assistance
- To maximize the benefits of AI, businesses need to strategically deploy AI and provide training and clarity for workers on AI use
- Virginia can be a leading state for AI-related business attraction and expansion if the infrastructure (utility capacity, sites, fiber connectivity) can keep up

The 34 recommendations outlined in Section 5 of this report are organized around the five goal areas:

1. **Pursue universal AI Literacy across the Commonwealth of Virginia** - *Pursue universal AI literacy across the Commonwealth by deploying AI literacy training resources that every student and every working-age Virginian can easily access.*
2. **Provide Workplace Training and Resources for Incumbent Workers** – *Immediately develop and implement new workforce training resources and improve visibility and access to existing training resources to strengthen incumbent workers' workplace skills that are essential in an AI-enabled workplace – training and resources are needed for incumbent workers at all levels within organizations and existing training organizations won't be able to fully meet the unprecedented volume and pace of demand.*
3. **Training and Resources for Workers Impacted by AI Deployment** - *Provide reskilling and upskilling resources for any displaced workers and develop re-employment resources specifically for workers impacted by AI.*
4. **Assistance for Virginia businesses and organizations to optimize the impact of AI** - *Help Virginia businesses and organizations by providing tools, technical assistance and resources so that they can optimize the impact of AI.*

5. Ensure the infrastructure is in place to support the growth and attraction of AI-related businesses in Virginia – *Virginia is better positioned than most states to attract and grow AI-related firms if sufficient electric capacity, sites and locations, and capital is available into the future.*

Significant disruptions and changes are likely for workers and businesses in every region of Virginia as AI use and adoption increases over the next few years. Fortunately, Virginia’s proactive efforts over the past two years to focus on AI literacy and on creating conditions for existing businesses to take advantage of AI tools puts the Commonwealth in a strong position to mitigate AI impacts and capitalize on opportunities during this time of transition.

Much of the significant work required over the next five years to equip Virginia’s workers and businesses the with training, tools and resources to adjust to AI-related workforce and workplace changes and to capitalize on AI-related opportunities is just getting started and will be essential during this period of technological change. It will require the focus and coordination of existing organizations and structures and the deployment of new tools and resources as well.

Through successful implementation of strategies to prepare Virginia’s businesses and workforce, Virginia should be in one of the strongest positions among all states to capitalize on AI-related opportunities and mitigate disruptions and impacts associated with the advancement and deployment of transformative AI technologies.

Planning Grant Allocation Data

Total Planning Grant Funding used (% of \$250,000 cap)

Region

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
FY18	\$212,738 85%	\$142,501 57%	\$79,920 32%	\$48,924 20%	\$46,559 19%	\$222,548 89%		\$78,811 32%	\$228,799 92%
FY19	\$178,927 72%	\$211,448 85%	\$187,933 75%	\$196,098 78%	\$248,397 99%	\$121,454 49%	\$173,031 69%	\$120,265 48%	\$71,717 29%
FY20	\$70,000 28%	\$200,000 80%		\$131,231 52%	\$210,544 84%		\$196,361 79%	\$100,000 40%	\$94,668 38%
FY21	\$134,356 54%	\$194,859 78%	\$77,316 31%	\$156,391 63%	\$248,677 99%				
FY22	\$240,000 96%	\$194,283 78%	\$263,457 105%		\$283,233 113%	\$228,916 92%	\$226,618 91%		\$100,000 40%
FY23	\$47,184 19%				\$122,400 49%	\$232,074 93%			\$100,000 40%
FY24	\$182,198 73%	\$109,807 44%	\$20,997 8%	\$87,490 35%	\$32,538 13%	\$92,203 37%	\$262,226 105%	\$226,893 91%	
FY25	\$249,306 100%	\$194,400 78%	\$252,000 101%	\$100,000 40%	\$235,292 94%	\$72,100 29%		\$87,450 35%	\$200,000 80%
FY26		\$197,199 79%	\$92,000 37%	\$100,000 40%	\$100,000 40%	\$280,842 112%	\$249,600 100%		

Planning Grant Allocation Data

Total sites planning funding used (% of \$250,000 cap)

Region

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
FY18	\$89,248 36%					\$93,305 37%			\$55,500 22%
FY19	\$127,928 51%	\$69,345 28%	\$99,018 40%	\$96,098 38%	\$65,000 26%				
FY20		\$100,000 40%						\$100,000 40%	
FY21				\$95,095 38%					
FY22			\$64,279 26%		\$100,000 40%				
FY23						\$100,000 40%			
FY24	\$157,198 63%		\$20,997 8%					\$155,893 62%	
FY25	\$99,306 40%	\$94,400 38%	\$100,000 40%		\$35,392 14%				
FY26			\$92,000 37%	\$100,000 40%					

% of total planning grant funding allocated to sites planning grants	
Region 1	36%
Region 2	18%
Region 3	39%
Region 4	36%
Region 5	13%
Region 6	15%
Region 7	0%
Region 8	42%
Region 9	7%
Average	23%



GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting Minutes February 10, 2026, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Melrose Plaza Conference Room 2502 Melrose Ave NW, Roanoke, VA 24017

Council members in attendance: Doug Agner, Paul Denham (Chair), John Capps, Whitney Czelusniak, Daniel DiMarco, Rich Diddams, Caley Edgerly, Greg Feldmann, Steve Harvey, Angela Joyner, Ken McFadyen, Nick Kessler, James Richards, Tony Seupaul, Frank Shushok, Luke Towles, Cathy Underwood, Richmond Vincent (Vice-Chair), Amy White, Jacob Wright, Justin Yalung.

Council members that joined remotely: Janice Crawford, Nanci Hardwick, Vince Hatcher

Council members not in attendance: Bif Johnson, Michael Friedlander, Fourd Kemper, Amy Sebring

Staff in attendance: Julia Kell, Sarah Lyon-Hill, Alyssa McKenney (virtually), John Provo, Jemma Sabokrouh, Emmalee Wagner, Barb Reibsamen

Public in attendance: Jack Honig, Peter Sheldon, Tamara Jamerson, Dana Silva, Siavash Sattar, Emma Carrol, Kevin Byrd, Julie Vick, Chris Conner

Chair Paul Denham called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

I. Opening

Chair Denham called the meeting to order. Ms. Emmalee Wagner conducted a roll call.

II. Staff Report

Program Reports

Ms. Jemma Sabokrouh introduced the financial reports and the Stoplight report and opened the floor for questions from the council.

Proposal Updates

Ms. Sabokrouh provided updates on two projects newly approved by the State Board, two administratively approved and two projects that have closed.

GO Virginia Elevator Pitch

Ms. Sabokrouh reviewed highlights of the GO Virginia framework and offered an elevator pitch that council members may use when talking about the program.

III. Project Proposals

Randolph College Mechanical Engineering Expansion in Greater Lynchburg

Ms. Sabokrouh reviewed the workforce development project application submitted by Randolph College requesting \$686,340 in GOVA funding. Ms. Sabokrouh shared application evaluation feedback collected through the review process and from the Executive Committee. Dr. Siavash Sattar represented the applicant and provided a project overview to the council. Chair Denham opened the floor for questions. Dr. Peter Sheldon and Dr. Sattar addressed the council members' questions.

Mr. Greg Feldmann motioned to approve the project for state board review; Mr. Caley Edgerly seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Members who recused themselves: Paul Denham



Ms. Sabokrouh reviewed the AM2 Initiative to Grow Advanced Manufacturing for Regions 2 and 3 statewide competitive implementation project application, submitted by the NRV Regional Commission, requesting \$6,518,720 in GOVA funding. Ms. Sabokrouh shared application evaluation feedback collected through the review process and from the Executive Committee. Kevin Byrd, representing the applicant, provided a project overview to the council. Chair Denham opened the floor for questions. Mr. Byrd addressed the council members' questions. Dr. Rich Diddams motioned to approve the project for state board review; Mr. Justin Yalung seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Members who recused themselves: Nancy Hardwick, Vince Hatcher

IV. Council Business

Meeting Minutes

The council reviewed minutes from the Region 2 Council Meeting held on October 29, 2025. Chair Denham asked if there were any corrections, additions, or questions regarding the minutes. Dr. John Capps motioned to approve the minutes; Ms. Amy White seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Terms and Vacancies

Chair Denham reviewed current and upcoming vacancies on the Region 2 council.

Region 2 Council Feedback Summary

Ms. Sabokrouh reviewed the Region 2 Council Feedback Summary. Chair Denham reviewed the role and responsibilities of the executive committee and reminded the council that they are always invited to attend executive committee meetings.

V. Regional Council Committee Update

Regional Council Committee

Vice Chair Richmond Vincent provided an update on the December 9th GO Virginia State Board Meeting and the December 15th State Board Governance & Policy Committee regarding discussions on childcare project eligibility and the request submitted during public comment from Regions 2, 3, and 7 to increase the flexibility in regional planning grant funding.

VI. New Business

Region 2 Council Retreat

Ms. Sabokrouh provided the details for the Region 2 Council Retreat scheduled for April 15th, 2026, and invited council members to provide their input for the event.

Stories of Impact

Ms. Barb Reibsamen introduced the Stories of Impact project and showed two videos highlighting two closed projects: Expanding Welding Training Capacity & Jobs in the Roanoke Valley and Building a Regional Health Sciences Talent Pipeline.

VII. Adjournment

Adjournment

Chair Denham adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.

Candidates for Council Member Consideration - April 2026

New River Valley



Marty Holliday

Marty is a workforce development leader with more than two decades of experience advancing employment opportunities across the New River and Mount Rogers region. She currently serves as Chief Operating Officer of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Foundation, where she provides strategic and operational leadership, works with the Board of Directors to guide mission and program development, and supports initiatives that help individuals facing barriers build skills and secure meaningful employment. Marty holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Human Resources) from Florida Southern College and is a Certified Workforce Development Professional.



Kevin Byrd, AICP

Kevin began working for the New River Valley Regional Commission in 2005 as a Regional Planner and was appointed Executive Director in October 2009. He has over 20 years of community development experience in the public sector at the town, county, and regional levels of government along with private sector consulting experience. He has a Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Science degree from Appalachian State University.

He is a past president of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), and currently serving as Secretary/Treasurer of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, and is on the Board of Directors for Carilion Clinic-NRV; the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce; Live, Work, Eat, Grow, Inc.; and the Southeast Regional Directors Institute.

He has received the Distinguished Business Leader of the Year Award from the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce along with the President's Award from both the National Association of Development Organizations and the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions. Through a collaborative leadership model, the New River Valley Regional Commission has been recognized as a Best Place to Work by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

When not working, you can often find Kevin running the roads and trails around the region or wetting a line in search of fish.

Roanoke-Alleghany Valley

No Image Available

David Wallenborn

David is the president and chief executive officer of P1 Technologies in Roanoke County, Virginia, a medical component manufacturer with over 350 employees serving customers worldwide. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from VMI and a Master of Business Administration degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida.

Greater Lynchburg



Jeff Spaeth

Jeff is President of AeroFin, a leading manufacturer of heat exchanger coils and heat transfer equipment serving customers across a wide range of industries. With a background in mechanical engineering from Virginia Tech and an MBA from William and Mary, Jeff has spent over 30 years in the heat exchanger industry, building experience across engineering, manufacturing, sales, and executive leadership roles. Since joining AeroFin in 2015, he has helped drive the company's growth and expansion. Jeff is focused on strengthening AeroFin's capabilities, investing in its people, and delivering high quality engineered heat transfer solutions to customers around the world.

Jeff, along with his wife who is a double lung-transplant recipient, and their two children, have called the region home for the last 11 years. Jeff is committed to making a positive impact on the community by also serving on the Workforce Development Board for Virginia Career Works – Central Region and the Board of Directors for Greater Lynchburg Habitat for Humanity.



Rosana Chaidez

Rosana Chaidez is the President and Chief Executive Officer of ARCO Innovations, one of the region's leading wholesale distributors of Metal, HVAC, Architectural Metal, Commercial Roofing products, and machinery for the HVAC and Roofing trades. ARCO Innovations is headquartered in Lynchburg, Virginia and has 23 locations in the Mid-Atlantic and eastern seaboard regions.

Before assuming her role at NB Handy, Ms. Chaidez had an extensive career at J.J. Haines, a Floor Covering Distributor based out of Baltimore MD. At J.J. Haines, she held executive positions in multiple disciplines including Chief Information Officer, VP Supply Chain, General Manager, VP Sales Marketing & Procurement and Senior Vice President of Sales.

Ms. Chaidez holds a BS in Business Management and an MBA from University of Maryland University College. Her expertise includes in-depth knowledge of both corporate and operational change management combined with strategic planning.

Ms. Chaidez is currently involved in multiple board of director roles: Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, Centra Health, CVCC board, and DUCHATEAU outside board member and Advisor to Shareholders.

GO VIRGINIA

Regional Council Assessment

REGION 2

Roanoke / New River Valley / Lynchburg

Summary Report | 2026

REGION 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of the GO Virginia Regional Council Assessment for Region 2 (Roanoke / New River Valley / Lynchburg). A total of 12 council member(s) completed the survey. The following pages present quantitative rating results, open-ended response themes, and key findings across mission alignment, roles and governance, engagement, operations, resources, and cross-regional collaboration.

Council Overview

Region	Region 2 — Roanoke / New River Valley / Lynchburg
Total Survey Respondents	12
Chair	1
Vice Chair	0
Members	11
Committee Participation	Supply Chain/Retooling VA Committee, Executive Committee (x2)

Q5 | MISSION, VISION & PURPOSE

Respondents rated three statements related to understanding and using GO Virginia's mission to guide their work as a Regional Council member.

Understand the mission and purpose of GO Virginia	100% Agree or Strongly Agree
Agree with the mission and purpose of GO Virginia	100% Agree or Strongly Agree
Use the mission and purpose to guide decisions	100% Agree or Strongly Agree

Q6 | ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & RELATIONSHIPS

This section covers self-assessed understanding of council roles, relationships with the State Board, and perceptions of staff support.

Council Member Relationships

Understand own roles and responsibilities	100% Agree or Strongly Agree
Respect fellow council members	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree
Feel respected by fellow council members	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree

State Board Relationships

State Board is responsive to regional priorities	75% Agree or Strongly Agree
State Board initiatives reflect regional needs	75% Agree or Strongly Agree
Relationship with State Board is productive	Predominantly Agree or Strongly Agree

Staff Relationships

Staff provides sufficient support	100% Agree or Strongly Agree
Respect the staff	Predominantly Strongly Agree
Feel respected by staff	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree

Q7 | ENGAGEMENT

Received adequate orientation when joining	100% Agree/Strongly Agree
Attend a majority of council meetings	92% Agree/Strongly Agree
Come to meetings prepared	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree
Receive meeting agendas in a timely manner	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree

Q8 | OPERATIONS

Projects approved are aligned with regional priorities	100% Agree/Strongly Agree
Meetings are efficient and effective	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree
Council decisions are transparent and inclusive	91% Agree/Strongly Agree
Council has the right mix of skills and experience	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree

Q9 | RESOURCES

Aware of Planning/Implementation funds from the GA	100% Agree/Strongly Agree
Understand the application process for accessing funds	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree
Deploying these funds is a priority	Predominantly Agree/Strongly Agree
Region sufficiently works to access and deploy funds	92% Agree/Strongly Agree

Q11 | TOP REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The following priorities were most frequently identified by respondents (Q11):

- Industry cluster scale-up: advanced manufacturing, health/life sciences, IT
- Talent pipeline development and workforce development
- Job creation and higher-wage job opportunities
- Strengthening regional connectivity and site readiness
- Economic Development and Innovation

Q12 | PRIMARY CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVENESS

Respondents identified the following as the primary challenges facing the Regional Council (Q12):

- Region 2 consists of two sub-regions (Roanoke/NRV and Lynchburg) with difficult cross-alignment
- Limited grant funding and planning caps that are too low
- Education and marketing to improve grant applicant quality
- Engagement between council meetings
- Friction between agricultural/slow-growth priorities and growth/opportunity focus

Q13 | PRIMARY STRENGTHS

The following strengths were most frequently identified by respondents (Q13):

- Staff rated 100% Strongly Agree on respect — the highest rating across all regions
- Thoughtful, diverse membership with productive group decision-making
- Highly collaborative partner ecosystem and strong leadership
- Qualified, engaged members with passion for economic development
- Well-organized and unbiased grant assessment process

Q14 | CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Respondents were asked about their awareness of other regions' priorities and use of the collaboration fund.

Aware of other regions' needs and priorities	63% Agree/Strongly Agree on
Own region works to utilize the collaboration fund	72% Agree/Strongly Agree on region
Regional Councils make reasonable efforts to work together	Predominantly Agree or Neutral

Q15 | FUND ACCESS CHALLENGES

Respondents identified the following challenges to accessing and utilizing the three GO Virginia fund categories designated for Regional Councils:

Planning Fund

Planning caps are too low for region-wide projects. Awareness among potential grantees is limited. Locally fiscally stressed communities have difficulty with cost requirements.

Implementation Fund

Getting hard-dollar matching funds from fiscally stressed localities is difficult even for supported projects. ROI is hard to quantify independently.

Collaboration Fund

Geographic spread makes collaboration harder. Establishing alignment among regions and identifying common projects is challenging.

NOTABLE MEMBER COMMENTS

The following direct comments from respondents illustrate key themes from the open-ended responses:

"Our staff is spectacular, could not ask for better support. They are extremely knowledgeable of the GOVA program and all its requirements." — Q6 — staff comment

"One of my concerns is the lack of a clear connection between projects/programs and new and lasting job creation." — Q16 — final comment

KEY OBSERVATIONS & FINDINGS

Staff received 100% Strongly Agree ratings on respect — the highest result across all nine regions. A notable Q16 comment raised concern about demonstrating job creation results from funded projects, particularly workforce programs, and questioned whether 'in kind' local government contributions represent genuine regionalism.

GO Virginia Region 2 FY27-28 Budget

Introduction

The Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) and office of Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) are assisting the GO Virginia Region 2 Council. This council is one of nine bodies organized around the state in response to a program administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The Council is charged with advancing economic growth and diversification in the New River Valley, Roanoke-Alleghany, and Lynchburg regions.

CECE will provide planning, research, marketing, outreach, and other administrative staff services to the council as described in this document. CECE will report key performance indicators and fund spending back to the Council each quarter. The center, which has provided these services since the council's creation, has a breadth of planning, research, and evaluation expertise, serving as a contractor to many federal, state, and local agencies and as a partner for the private sector. Experience highly relevant to GO Virginia includes labor market demand and skills mapping projects, targeted industry studies, and coordination of access to university technical expertise. CECE will provide a designated project lead and support staff, while also drawing on a team of specialists with expertise in regional planning, economic development research, and program evaluation.

CPE will serve as the fiscal agent for all funds. CPE manages a multi-million-dollar portfolio of contracts for federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the private sector. CPE will provide a designated project manager and accountant to provide services that attend to the specialized needs for the funds received by Virginia Tech. This will include logistical support, contractual services, technical assistance, and financial services. A full-cost accounting summary will be provided as needed along with all other reporting required by the state.

Staffing plan

Dedicated staff, CECE and CPE:

- John Provo, Executive Director
- Jemma Sabokrouh, Program Manager (Program management, council support, and outreach)
- Emmalee Wagner, Program Coordinator (General administration and planning, council support)
- Barb Reibsamen, Program Coordinator (Outreach, technical assistance)

- Julia Kell, Communications Specialist (Communications, marketing, and website)
- Alyssa McKenney, Contracts Program Specialist (Contracts management)
- Tracie Smith, Fiscal Specialist (Accounting)

Specialized staff, CECE:

- Elli Travis, Associate Director for Impact and Evaluation (Project and program evaluation)
- Sarah Lyon-Hill, Associate Director for Research Development (Planning and research)

Budgets

Year One: FY27

	Region 2 Capacity Building Budget \$250,000	Variable Budget 8% of grant amount	Provided by Support Organization at No Cost (est.)
Audit			\$500.00
Contract Services	\$6,850.00		\$2,200.00
Fiscal/Accounting Services		\$160,000.00	\$11,500.00
Legal Expenses			\$3,000.00
Marketing, Outreach, and Websites			\$10,000.00
Meetings & Workshops			
Rent			\$12,000.00
Salaries (Fringe if applicable)	\$237,950.00		\$49,088.00
Supplies & Equipment	\$1,200.00		\$725.00
Taxes & Insurance			
Travel	\$4,000.00		
Program Support Total	\$250,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$89,013.00
Contract Services			
Growth & Diversification Plan Development			
Planning Grants			
Planning Services Total	\$	\$	\$
Total	\$250,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$89,013.00

Year Two: FY28

	Region 2 Capacity Building Budget \$250,000	Variable Budget 8% of grant amount	Provided by Support Organization at No Cost (est.)
Audit			\$500.00
Contract Services	\$6,850.00		\$2,200.00
Fiscal/Accounting Services		\$160,000.00	\$11,500.00
Legal Expenses			\$3,000.00
Marketing, Outreach, and Websites			\$10,000.00
Meetings & Workshops			
Rent			\$12,000.00
Salaries (Fringe if applicable)	\$237,950.00		\$49,088.00
Supplies & Equipment	\$1,200.00		\$725.00
Taxes & Insurance			
Travel	\$4,000.00		
Program Support Total	\$250,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$89,013.00
Contract Services			
Growth & Diversification Plan Development			
Planning Grants			
Planning Services Total	\$	\$	\$
Total	\$250,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$89,013.00

Narrative

Capacity Building Budget

1. Salaries and Fringe

Dedicated staff include the program manager, two program coordinators, and support from three additional faculty/staff members.

- a. *General Administration:* Management of application development and technical support to applicants; Onboarding subgrantees; Project monitoring; Data collection and management; Support and coordination with subgrantees; Reporting to the Region 2 Council and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); Ongoing evaluation of

project and program impacts; Support to the Region 2 Council, including onboarding new members, scheduling and facilitating quarterly council and executive committee meetings, agendas and content; Communication and coordination with regional stakeholders.

- b. *Marketing & Outreach*: Quarterly applicant Q&A sessions; Design of informational and technical program materials to build program awareness in the region and support applicants/subgrantees; Outreach to organizations with project opportunities; Response to program inquiries; Website content development and maintenance; Design and maintenance of program Tableau dashboard of program outcomes; Outreach and coordination with past subgrantees and developing visual content to celebrate program impact; Plan and facilitate annual program celebratory event(s).
- c. *Meetings & Workshops*: Facilitate quarterly council and executive committee meetings including agenda development, data & support materials, facilities management, soliciting guest presenters, and ensuring a quorum; Schedule and facilitate workshops for Growth & Diversification Plan development, Speakers Bureau presentations, council membership meetings with partners, and annual review meetings with stakeholders.
- d. *Growth & Diversification Plan Development*: Research and data collection; Engagement with regional stakeholders, including economic and workforce development organizations, planning district commissions, higher education institutions, and target-sector companies, to support the development of the plan with high priority needs in the region; Hosting and facilitating workshops and meetings; Document design and structure.
- e. *Program Evaluation and Related Research*: Develop and produce evaluation reports assessing program impact and progress; identifying priority actions for program growth and improvement, in alignment with the Growth & Diversification Plan; Report and Presentation to the Region 2 Council on key findings.

2. Contract Services

- a. *Professional Printing*: Growth & Diversification Plan, annual reports, informational materials
- b. *Catering, Venues*: Annual regional celebration event, council retreat

3. Supplies & Equipment

- a. *Materials and Supplies*: For meetings, workshops, and marketing or outreach activities and events

- b. *Licenses*: Lightcast license for labor market data analysis for Growth & Diversification Plan and support to applicants and subgrantees; Tableau license to develop and maintain a public-facing data dashboard for Region 2 project outcomes.

4. Travel

- a. Travel to and from council and executive committee meetings, state program activities and events, Region 2 meetings and workshops, meetings with subgrantees and potential applicants, Q&A sessions, stakeholder meetings, presentations for program outreach, and events.

Variable Budget

1. Fiscal/Accounting Services:

- a. *VT CPE serves as the contract manager and fiscal agent for all funds.* Establish and ensure all fiscal management procedures are in accordance with state regulations; Compile quarterly financial data and facilitate council review of Region 2 allocations and project drawdown by subgrantees; Fulfill financial reporting requested by the Council or required by the state; Facilitate legal review of all contracts, agreements, and remittances for applicants (subgrantees).

Items Provided to Council at No Cost

- 1. **Audit:** DHCD requires each grantee to submit an annual audit. Many smaller support organizations in other GO Virginia regions include the costs associated with an independent CPA in preparing their audit. Larger organizations like Virginia Tech absorb those costs since a university-wide audit already happens annually. The \$500 audit line item provided at no cost by the support organization accounts for VT CPE time to pull the VT university wide audit, give a brief review, submit it to DHCD, and responding to questions or additional information as requested. It does not include the University's estimated time to prepare the university-wide audit.
- 2. **Contract Services:** Meeting venue fees for eight (8) meetings per year for the Region 2 Council and Executive Committee provided at no cost to the support organization.

3. **Unrecovered Fiscal and Accounting Services:** Unrecovered fiscal and accounting services from VT CPE for the Region 2 Capacity Building funds. Budget preparation and presentation for eight (8) meetings per year for the Region 2 Council and Executive Committee. Fulfill additional financial reporting requested by the Council.
4. **Legal Services:** Facilitation of legal review of all contracts and agreements, as well as remittances for applicants. Audit and legal expenses are provided at no cost by support organization
5. **Website and Webinar Hosting and Licenses:** Web presence, Zoom webinar licenses, and related services provided at no cost by support organization.
6. **Rent:** Rent provided at no cost by support organization.
7. **Salaries:** Director John Provo's time provided at no cost by support organization.
8. **Unrecovered Supplies and Equipment:** Meeting printing and facilitation supplies quarterly council and executive committee meetings at no cost by support organization.