



Region 9 Rural Entrepreneurship Action Plan

March 19, 2020





BEGIN.

Key project team members



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Sr. Project Manager



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Project status



Task	Nov		Dec				Jan				Feb				March				April							
	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27
Project Kickoff																										
Review Documents																										
Interviews (Visits 1&2)																										
Case Studies																										
Preliminary Report																										
Review with Council (Call)																										
Prepare Plan																										
Final Presentation (Visit 3)																										

How We Got Here

- Venture Hub Project (Completed October 2019)
 - Biz Plan for new “Hub” space in Charlottesville/Albemarle
 - Local Project Team now working on Implementation
- But, what about other parts of Region 9?
 - Rural Entrepreneurship Project (December 2019-April 2020)
- Rural recommendations can move forward with or w/o Venture Hub in place
- Project Objective:

Whatever resources and support are made available to a new business owner in downtown Charlottesville should also be available to the entrepreneur in Warrenton, Louisa, Sperryville, or Lovingston.

Principles for Rural Ecosystem Work

(and the Venture Hub too)

- **Serve all entrepreneurs**—from venture-ready tech firms to home-based businesses
- Build an **open and welcoming** environment in **every** Region 9 community.
- **Embrace the diversity of Region 9**, defined in geographic as well as demographic terms
- **Programming will be focused** to support the unique challenges of different segments of the target customer base

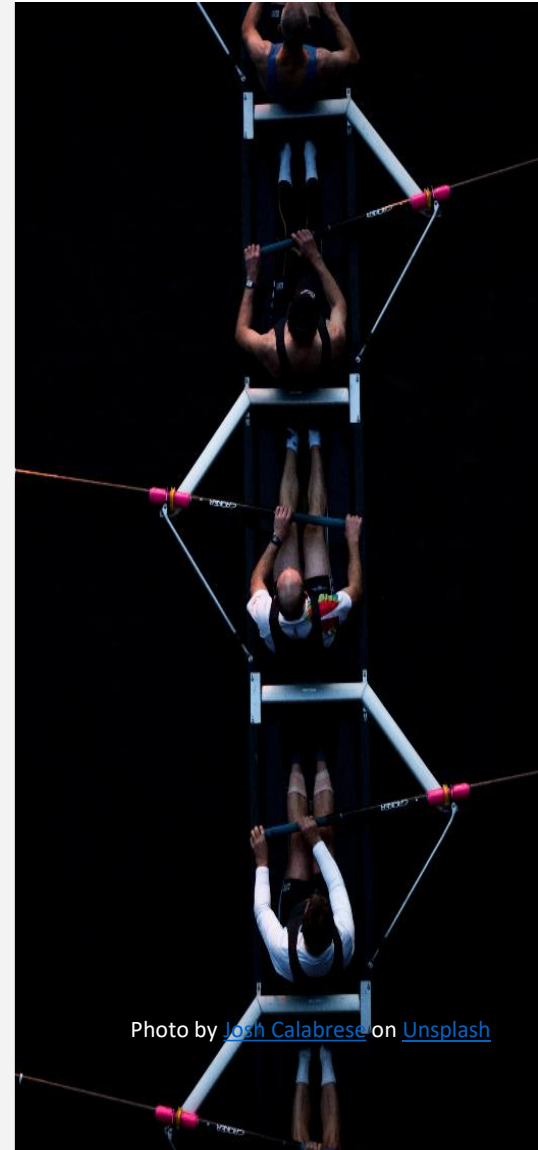


Photo by [Josh Calabrese](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Lessons learned

- ▶ Local Customization
- ▶ Engage All
- ▶ Entrepreneur Leadership
- ▶ Capital Linkages
- ▶ Power of Youth Entrepreneurship
- ▶ Space Matters
- ▶ Tell The Story
- ▶ Don't Do it Alone

Proposed Program: A Snapshot

Challenge	Recommendation
A Home for Entrepreneurs in Every County	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coworking / Entrepreneurial Center Grant Program 2. Region 9 Passport
Easier Access to Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Entrepreneurial Coaches 4. Expanded Outreach to Rural Counties 5. Resource Navigation Portal
Streamlined Permitting and Licensing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Review Process; Designated Ombudsperson
Access to Equity Capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Rural Fund and Investor Training
Specialized Resources for Food and Beverage Manufacturers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Food Enterprise Center/Commercial Kitchen at Carver Center
Youth Entrepreneurship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Expand E-squared program
Diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Promote entrepreneurship to underserved communities including minorities, women, veterans, and ex-convicts

A Home For Entrepreneurs

- Create a Coworking Space/Network Hub in Every County
 - Space could be public or private
 - Or Co-Located with other Facilities
 - Housed in an iconic building designed to facilitate connections and collaborations
- Develop collaborative grant application to GO Virginia to establish locations and kick-off programming (estimated \$50,000 per county)
- Coworking Passport
 - Provide shared access to facilities across Region 9
 - Build Regional awareness
 - Enhance Partnerships



Easier Access to Resources

- Support 2 regional coaches focused on supporting rural entrepreneurs
 - In partnership with SBDC, EDCs, and other service providers
 - Linked to Venture Hub
- Coaching Services include:
 - Business Concierge
 - Resource Navigation
 - Ecosystem Cheerleading
- Include one coach with food/ag focus??
- Regional Ecosystem Calendar





Streamlined Permitting and Licensing

- Develop processes for “entrepreneur-friendly” regulatory review efforts
- Designate “Small Business Ombudsman” at County or Regional Levels

Equity Capital



- Support rural ventures facing “valley of death”
 - Funding range (\$50K to \$1m)
 - Links to Charlottesville, DC, or Richmond?
- Develop plan to support regional angel group
- Introduce rural focused angel investor training/support

Youth Entrepreneurship

- Area of regional advantage
 - Excellent programs underway in Culpeper and Fauquier
- Create regional network to:
 - Share program ideas
 - Engage every student in Region 9
 - Expand non-school programs
 - Support regional biz plan competition



Focus on Food/Ag Entrepreneurship

- Area of Strong Regional Advantage
 - Food/Ag is 2nd largest sector for regional startups (Teconomy, 2018)
 - World Class Firms already here
 - Proximity to Major Markets
- Build Stronger Link between Innovation and Food/Ag Economies
- Support Food Enterprise Center project (Culpeper)



Build a More Diverse Ecosystem

- Regions growing immigrant population not engaged in ecosystem
- New programming targeted to underserved groups is needed
 - Latinx
 - African-American
 - New Immigrants
 - Ex-Offenders
 - Veterans
- Link to Existing Assets
 - Fauquier MEC Veteran Programming
 - Local Economy Working Group (UVA)

Next Steps?

- Incorporate your Feedback
- Formal Presentation to Regional Council (April 30)
- Create Work Plans for Key Action Items
- Link Ecosystem work to other challenge areas
 - Broadband
 - Affordable Housing



Questions and Discussion



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