



**Central Virginia Small Business Development Center**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# ***GO Virginia grant expands post-Covid support for local small businesses***

*With \$131,220, local SBDC is hiring an Assistant Director and offering 100 more websites at no cost to rural communities*

**(Charlottesville, VA) April 1, 2021-** Meeting the significantly increased needs of small business owners since the pandemic has been no small feat, and the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CV SBDC) has been key to answering the call in our region. Now the team and its services are expanding to continue providing this higher level of specialized support through the post-pandemic economic rebound.

Hours spent on CV SBDC's flagship service, one-on-one business advising, tripled from 2019 to 2020, with no indication of slowing during the first two quarters of 2021. The group also recently launched the Website Jump Start program to provide websites at no cost to business owners through a partnership with Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville.

"The word is out... the Central Virginia SBDC has several business and technical experts that help entrepreneurs access resources at no charge," said Rebecca Haydock, SBDC Director. "Our targeted programs and offerings are continuing to attract more interest and add value across the local economy."

Thanks to GO Virginia and the support of regional partners, that impact will continue to grow. A \$131,220 award from the GO Virginia Economic Resiliency and Recovery (ERR) fund recently approved by the GO Virginia Board will support expanded business services and website development in GO Virginia Region 9 and will target rural localities and underserved communities.

"Due to the impact of COVID 19, the need for business services provided by the SBDC and the need for business to have a digital presence has never been greater," said Ed Scott, Region 9 Chair. "This project will help 240 businesses in our region that have those needs and ultimately help drive regional economic recovery."

The funds support the hire of our recently appointed Assistant Director, Peter Alamilla, who will provide additional capacity for program leadership, community relations, and more business advising hours. With the addition of GO Virginia funds, the Website Jump Start program can now be expanded to build 100 more websites and also include the counties of Culpeper, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, and Rappahannock.

The website development program had its first test earlier this year when Cameron Nelson, Chief Digital Advisor for the CV SBDC, worked with a local entrepreneur Khadija Hemmati to build her first website for her business, Khadija's Kitchen. Before this, Hemmati sold her Afghani-inspired food only at local markets.

“Cameron worked hard and was very quick to get my website up and running and he also helped me develop a company logo,” said Ms. Hemmati. “In the first two weeks after we went online, I had 25 to 30 online orders through GrubHub!”

Applications are now being accepted. Read more about [Website Jump Start](#).

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GO (Growth and Opportunity) Virginia ([www.GOVirginia.org](http://www.GOVirginia.org)) is a statewide economic development initiative driving regional economic growth by incentivizing collaboration between business, education, and local government through grant opportunities identified regional Growth & Diversification Plans. The GO Virginia Region 9 ([www.GOVirginia9.org](http://www.GOVirginia9.org)) footprint includes: the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Rappahannock. The Central Virginia Partnership serves as the support organization for the GO Virginia Region 9 Council ([www.centralvirginia.org](http://www.centralvirginia.org)).

Central Virginia SBDC (CV SBDC) is hosted by Community Investment Collaborative and funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, George Mason University, and local supporters. The Virginia SBDC is nationally accredited by America’s SBDCs. CV SBDC provides hands-on help and access to business experts and relevant resources at no charge to empower entrepreneurs to achieve their goals. Learn more about CV SBDC at <https://cvsbdc.org/>.

Community Investment Collaborative (CIC) is a Community Development Finance Institution with a mission to strengthen our community and contribute to economic development by fueling the success of under-resourced entrepreneurs through education, mentoring, financing, and networking. Learn more about CIC at [www.cicville.org](http://www.cicville.org).