



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

GO Virginia Region 9 Economic Growth & Diversification Plan 2025 **DRAFT**

GO Virginia Region 9



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INTRODUCTION

This report is the fifth Growth & Diversification Plan (Growth Plan) published by the GO Virginia Region 9 Council (Region 9 Council) to comply with the 2016 Growth and Opportunity Act two-year update requirement. This 2025 Growth Plan is a roadmap for implementing the GO Virginia program in GO Virginia Region 9 (Region 9) for the next two years. This report also lays out the grant opportunities that could be awarded to strengthen the regional economy by diversifying and growing higher paying jobs in target traded sectors.

Approach

Most of the economic data for this report is from Chmura's JOBS EQ database. JOBS EQ is the in-house database available at the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED), the support organization for the Region 9 Council. Additionally, many other significant regional reports have been reviewed, and data has been culled that supports this effort. Highlights are provided in the narrative and detailed data can be found in the Appendix.

The Region 9 Council, regional stakeholders, and subject matter experts provided feedback and input to help develop the grant opportunities in this report. Details are provided in the Stakeholder Engagement section of this report.

GO Virginia Program

GO Virginia, where "GO" stands for Growth & Opportunity, is a statewide economic development initiative to promote private-sector economic growth and diversification across Virginia by targeting new investment and innovation export-oriented industry sectors. To implement the program statewide, nine different regional councils were established, and each has developed a unique Growth & Diversification Plan. Regional Councils are responsible for advancing grants that incentivize collaboration between business, higher education, and local government, and that address the opportunities outlined in respective regional Growth Plans.

The GO Virginia program aims to promote regional collaboration and support economic growth and diversification by funding projects that encourage the expansion of traded industries associated with higher-wage employment and increased economic impact. According to program definitions, a "traded industry" refers to an industry sector in which most goods and services are sold, or could be sold, outside the Commonwealth of Virginia.

To review previous Region 9 Growth & Diversification Plans and Updates visit www.GOVirginia9.org.

Region 9

GO Virginia Region 9 serves eleven localities in Central Virginia that encompass rural settings and active main streets. The region's footprint includes the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, and Rappahannock, and the City of Charlottesville.

Region 9 shares the same footprint as Virginia Career Works - Piedmont Region, as well as the combined footprints of two planning districts, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (Planning District 9) and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (Planning District 10). CVPED is the administrative support organization for the Region 9 Council. The University of Virginia (UVA) is the only four-year university within the footprint and there are three community colleges that serve the area including Piedmont Virginia Community College, Germanna Community College, and Laurel Ridge Community College.



The region has a population of 443,709 individuals with 63% labor force participation, average per capita income of \$47,720 and household income of \$91,656 (JobsEQ, 2024Q2). The region offers rural and urban landscapes with the greater Charlottesville area earning a top spot in livability.com's annual ranking of Top 100 Best Places to Live in America (2022).

Region 9 Goal

The Region 9 Council goal is to help strengthen the Commonwealth's economy by catalyzing regional target sector expansion and employment through grants that incentivize collaboration between business, higher education and local government.

Strategies

The GO Virginia program advances goals through four strategies: Talent Development, Grow Existing Business, Entrepreneurship, and Site Readiness. Region 9 strategies and related objectives are noted in the following chart.

Region 9 Strategies

 Talent Development	Strengthen the talent pipeline in target industry sectors by encouraging collaboration among education, business, and workforce partners to develop in-demand skills, retain local talent, and attract new talent to the region.
 Grow Existing Business	Enable the adoption of advanced technologies, foster scale-up of high-growth firms, enhance supply chain integration, and strengthen cluster ecosystems.
 Entrepreneurship	Drive innovation and entrepreneurship in target sectors by advancing startup formation, research commercialization, and the development of innovation networks.
 Site Readiness	Support strategic site development for target sectors to enable business attraction, expansion, and cluster growth.

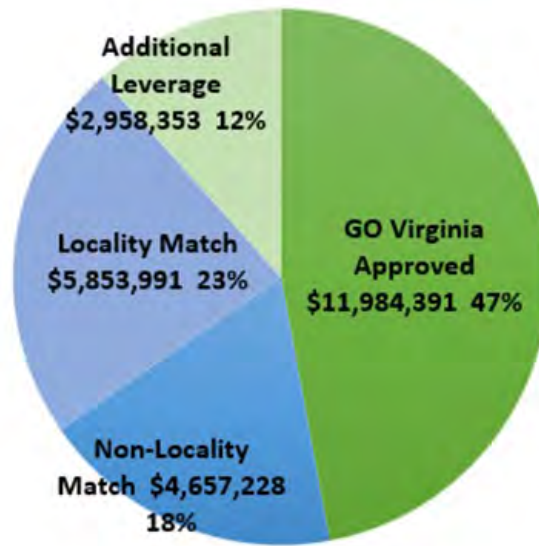
Region 9 Target Sectors

After reviewing all Region 9 sectors, growth trends, and strategic assets, the five regional target traded sectors will remain Bioscience, Financial & Business Services, Food & Beverage Manufacturing, Information Technology & Communications, and Light Manufacturing for the next two years. Supporting details and methodology appear later in this report.

Region 9 Success

Since 2016, Region 9 has awarded 33 grants totaling \$11,984,931. Outcomes and impact from those grants continue to grow. The activities and outcomes from these grants, both closed and active, will have informed many of the 2025 grant opportunities.

GO Virginia Region 9 Funded Projects

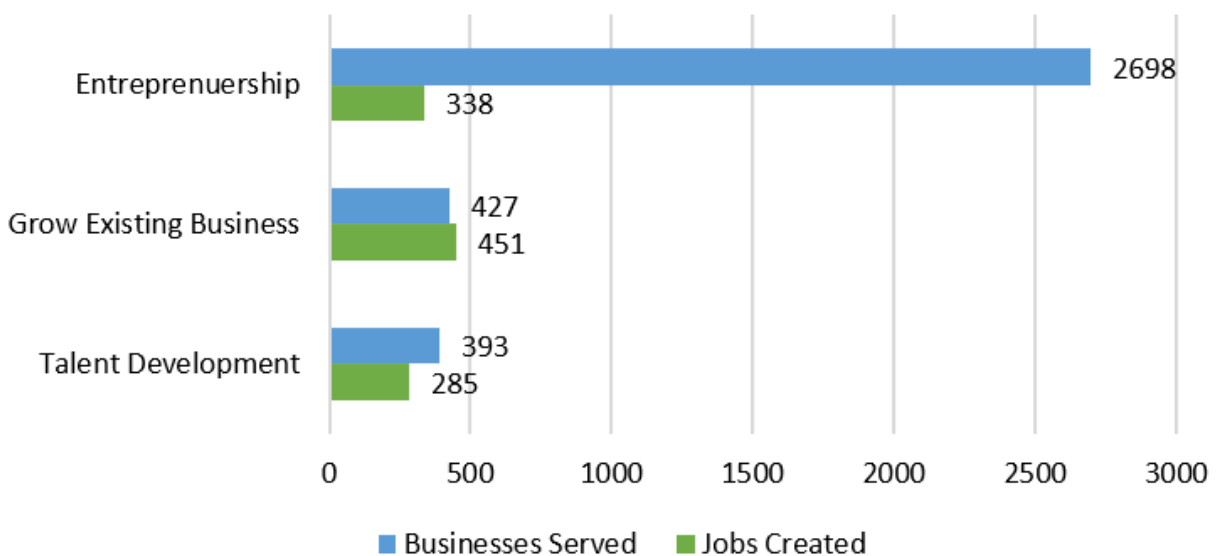


Through June 30, 2025

■ GO Virginia Approved ■ Non-Locality Match ■ Locality Match ■ Additional Leverage

Outcomes by Strategy

Through April 30, 2025



REGIONAL ECONOMY

The benchmark for GO Virginia program is average Annual Wages as measured in the second quarter (Q2) of each calendar year, sourced from Chmura JOBS EQ. Average Annual Wages have risen by 7.34% since Q2 2022 in Region 9, compared to 9.62% for the entire Commonwealth. As of Q2 2024, Average Annual Wages in Region 9 are \$61,967 and \$74,199 in Virginia. The trend of increasing Average Annual Wages continues, though it should be noted the gap between the region and state average is widening, at \$12,232 in 2024, up from a \$7,372 difference in 2018. The average wages between the two planning districts in the region is significant.

Region/Subregion	2022 Average Annual Wages ¹	2023 Average Annual Wages ²	2024 Average Annual Wages ³	% Change 2022-2024
Region 9	\$57,732	\$60,811	\$61,967	7.34%
Rappahannock-Rapidan RC			\$55,385	
Thomas Jefferson PDC			\$65,001	
Virginia	\$67,689	\$71,121	\$74,199	9.62%
^{1,2,3} Employment and wages data (Q2) are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed by Chmura where necessary.				

Employment & Unemployment

As of 2024Q4, total employment for the GO Virginia Region 9 was 195,935 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2024Q4, employment increased 2.0% in the region. The unemployment rate for the GO Virginia Region 9 was 3.0% as of March 2025. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 4.3%. One year earlier, in March 2024, the unemployment rate in the GO Virginia Region 9 was 2.3%.

Cost of Living

The Cost-of-Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 7.2% higher in GO Virginia Region 9 than the U.S. average.

Regional Challenges

Numerous regional institutions name challenges in childcare, healthcare, and housing as issues which impact quality of life, talent attraction, economic growth, and community vitality. GO Virginia does not fund projects in these domains but acknowledges these issues as imperative elements of a comprehensive economic development effort.

Industries

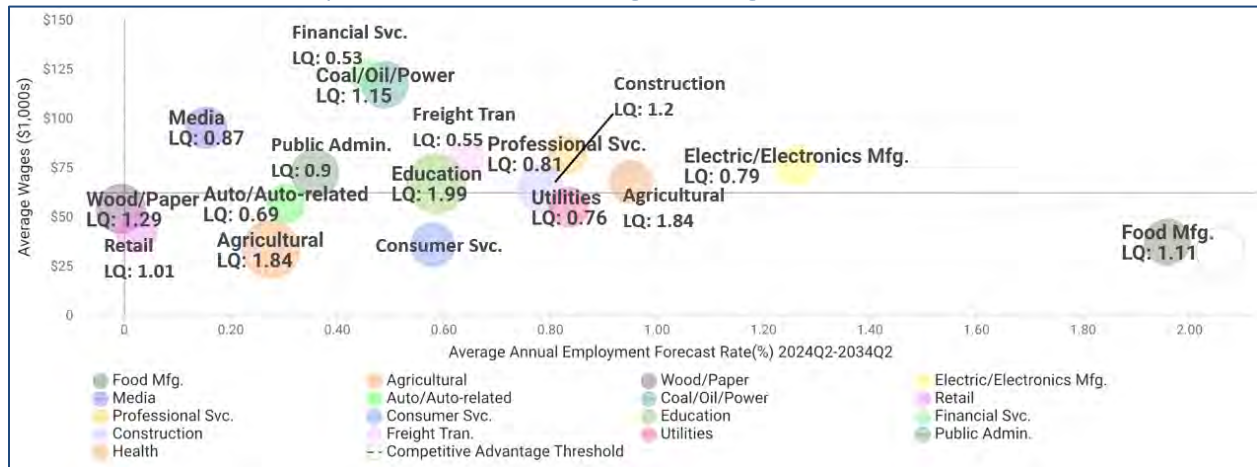
The top five industry sectors (2-digit NAICS) based on employment in Region 9 are the non-traded sectors of Education Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Construction (Q2 2024). These sectors employ 111,675 of the region's 194,816 workers. Although they are essential, the GO Virginia program prioritizes the traded sector. The top seven traded industries by employment are highlighted gray in the table below. The location quotients (LQ) for these industries at this 2-digit NAICS code level range from .49 to .97. A location quotient over 1.0 shows a regional competitive advantage in that sector.

Industry Employment Rate for GO Virginia Region 9 as of 2024Q2

NAICS	Industry	Employment	Avg Ann Wages	LQ
61	Educational Services	33,192	\$68,717	2.12
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	27,751	\$65,034	0.96
44	Retail Trade	19,256	\$36,471	1.01
72	Accommodation and Food Services	17,495	\$28,007	1.03
23	Construction	13,981	\$64,964	1.20
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	13,801	\$97,787	0.97
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	10,736	\$46,627	1.30
31	Manufacturing	9,676	\$65,962	0.63
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	8,318	\$48,764	0.70
92	Public Administration	8,150	\$71,979	0.90
48	Transportation and Warehousing	5,335	\$69,850	0.55
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,656	\$36,926	1.17
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,393	\$34,287	1.84
52	Finance and Insurance	4,105	\$126,065	0.53
42	Wholesale Trade	3,601	\$78,388	0.49
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,151	\$68,396	0.91
51	Information	2,707	\$99,835	0.72
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,075	\$101,424	0.69
22	Utilities	1,606	\$117,146	1.60
99	Unclassified	591	\$51,163	1.57
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	241	\$79,122	0.34
	Total - All Industries	194,816	\$61,967	1.00

Source: JobsEQ®

Industry Clusters for GO Virginia Region 9 as of 2024Q2



Source: Lightcast, as published in CEDS Superregional Strategies report ; RRRC & TJPDC, 2024/
<https://www.govirginia9.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Super-Regional-Strategies-VA-Region-9.pdf>

2025 Target Industries

The following questions were considered in selecting target industry sectors were, as defined by the designated 2-digit NAICS codes.

Is the sector a traded sector?

Does the sector have significant employment?

Does the region have an advantage in the sector? (LQ)

Has it grown over the past five years?

Is it projected to grow in the next two years?

Are there other considerations?

In 2023 Ag Tech (325314, 325320) was added as an industry in Food and Beverage Manufacturing. The Biosciences sector, for example, covers not just research and development in the biomedical and biotechnology fields, but also diagnostic laboratory services and the manufacture of related devices and instruments. For Region 9, the targeted industry sectors and 2-digit NAICS codes are:

- Biosciences (32, 33, 56, 54, 62)
- Financial and Business Services (32, 51, 52, 53, 54)
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing (31, 32)
- Information Technology/Communications (23, 33, 42, 51, 54)
- Light Manufacturing (31, 32, 33)

Although Transportation and Warehousing have high average wages, LQ, and employment, this sector was not chosen as a priority cluster due to stakeholder input. Local governments prefer to

be selective in this sector because it strains infrastructure, raises aesthetic concerns, generates low tax revenue, and faces limitations with road improvements and VDOT integration. Additionally, the sector lacks regional relevance, as most counties do not have related needs and the area is not a logistics hub.

As noted below, employment for these target sectors totals 47,426. The average annual wages for these clusters exceed those for the region except for Food & Beverage Manufacturing. Moreover, these sectors align with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) Innovative Framework.

Industry Employment and Wages for GO Virginia Region 9 Target Sectors

Industry Cluster	Employment	2024Q2 Avg Annual Wages	5-year Annual %	2-year forecast
Biosciences	3,387	\$102,395	3.0%	1.0%
Financial and Business Services	19,137	\$99,299	1.4%	0.8%
Food and Beverage Manufacturing	2,629	\$37,294	2.7%	1.9%
Information Technology/Communications	13,363	\$101,154	2.5%	1.2%
Light Manufacturing	8,910	\$64,859	-0.4%	0.9%
Total – GO Virginia Region 9 Clusters	47,426	\$81,000	1.8%	1.2%
Total - All Industries	194,816	\$61,967	0.6%	0.6%

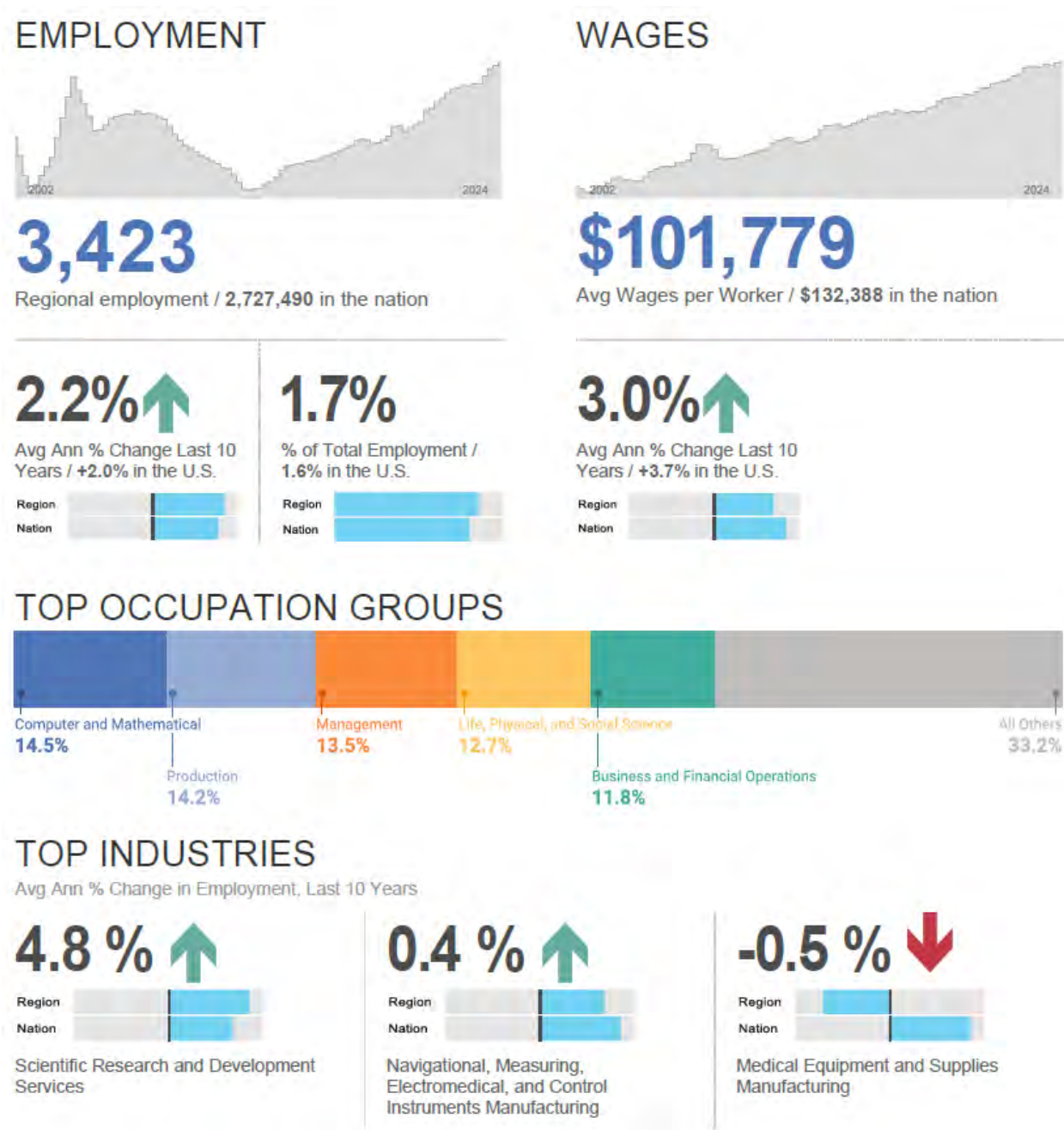
Source: JobsEQ®

TARGET INDUSTRY PROFILES

The following is a snapshot profile of each target sector in GO Virginia Region 9.

Biosciences

The Biosciences sector is comprised of eight 4-digit NAICS industries related to the development, manufacturing, usage, and disposal of medical and pharmaceutical products. In 2016, 137 Region 9 establishments employed 2,534. As of 2024Q4, the workforce increased to 3,423 across 216 establishments, with \$320 million annual purchases estimated from US suppliers, 62% being out-of-state. The industry represents \$0.5 billion in regional GDP, with 4.2% growth over the decade.



Source: JobsEQ®

Financial and Business Services

The Financial and Business Services sector is made up of 24 4-digit NAICS industries covering a broad range of products and services. Industries in this sector include those in Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate, as well as accounting, consulting, and data processing services. As of 2016, 16,243 workers were employed by the sector in Region 9, spanning 2,310 establishments. Employment increased by 19.5% since, adding 3,181 new jobs as of Q4 2024. With average wages of \$99,424, five-year annual growth average of 1.4% exceeding the all-industries regional average of 0.6%, and two-year forecast of 0.8% annual growth exceeding the projected 0.6% all-industry average, the Financial and Business Services sector remains ripe for investment and growth.

EMPLOYMENT



19,424

Regional employment / 19,282,108 in the nation

WAGES



\$99,544

Avg Wages per Worker / \$125,226 in the nation

1.7% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +1.8% in the U.S.



9.9%

% of Total Employment / 11.6% in the U.S.



3.7% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +4.0% in the U.S.



TOP OCCUPATION GROUPS



TOP INDUSTRIES

Avg Ann % Change in Employment, Last 10 Years

2.4 % ↑



Computer Systems Design and Related Services

4.1 % ↑



Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

2.5 % ↑



Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services

Source: JobsEQ®

Food and Beverage Manufacturing

The Food and Beverage Manufacturing sector consists of 12 4-digit NAICS industries involved in the food manufacturing process. Beverage Manufacturing (NAICS 3121) is the predominant industry, employing 2,198 (2024Q2), with 2.2% annual growth. Food & Beverage Manufacturing was originally selected as a target cluster because it represented a value-add industry with strong ties to the region's agrarian base and potential for export growth. Stakeholder feedback and project announcements indicate that due to the region's tie to agriculture, food & beverage production, as well as innovation in technology and biotechnology, Ag-Tech is an emerging sector included within the cluster. Ag-Tech is included in the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) Innovative Framework as a target niche, and defined as including five NAICS codes; two of which have representation in Region 9: 325314 (\$68,475) and 325320 (\$89,395). As similar establishments are identified, relevant NAICS codes will be added to the cluster.

EMPLOYMENT



2,677

Regional employment / 2,165,254 in the nation

WAGES



\$37,534

Avg Wages per Worker / \$60,566 in the nation

4.7% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +2.2% in the U.S.



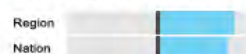
1.4%

% of Total Employment / 1.3% in the U.S.

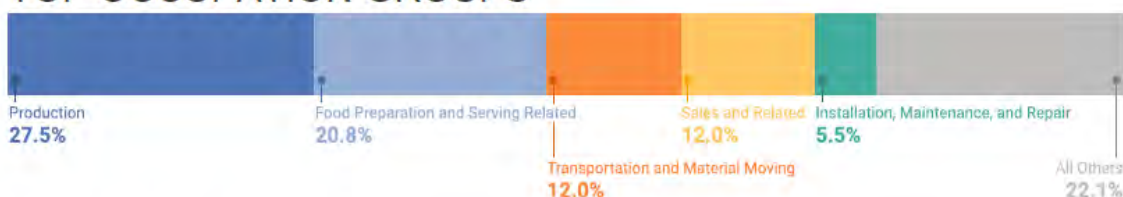


3.4% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +3.1% in the U.S.



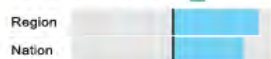
TOP OCCUPATION GROUPS



TOP INDUSTRIES

Avg Ann % Change in Employment, Last 10 Years

4.7% ↑



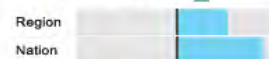
Wineries

12.2% ↑



Breweries

0.7% ↑



Soft Drink Manufacturing

Source: JobsEQ®

Information Technology & Communications

The Information Technology & Communications sector includes 16 different 4-digit NAICS industries involved in the development, manufacturing, and usage of Information Technology (IT) and communications-related products and services. Establishments within this sector are primarily in research and development, electrical component manufacturing, and computer systems design. In addition to fiber optic cable production, manufactured products include search, detection, navigation, guidance, aeronautical, and nautical system, and instrument manufacturing. Regional employment in the industry sector has increased from 11,550 to 13,334 over the last ten years. At the same time, the number of establishments has increased from 1,056 to 1,687 (2023). Software developers make up the highest employment category at 1,252, followed by management analysts (860), and electricians (732).

EMPLOYMENT



13,344

Regional employment / 12,699,577 in the nation

WAGES



\$102,243

Avg Wages per Worker / \$131,458 in the nation

2.0% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +2.7% in the U.S.



6.8%

% of Total Employment / 7.6% in the U.S.



3.1% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +4.2% in the U.S.



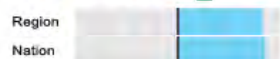
TOP OCCUPATION GROUPS



TOP INDUSTRIES

Avg Ann % Change in Employment, Last 10 Years

3.0 % ↑



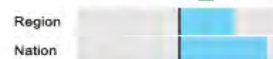
Building Equipment Contractors

2.4 % ↑



Computer Systems Design and Related Services

2.5 % ↑



Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services

Source: JobsEQ®

Light Manufacturing

Compared to traditional manufacturing, which is typically capital-intensive and wholesale-oriented, light manufacturing requires less capital investment and infrastructure and consists of the final assembly steps for consumer goods, high-tech devices, medical components and other goods. In 2016, Region 9 was home to 353 establishments in the industry sector, employing 8,541 workers. Since then, the sector has grown by 393 jobs and 333 establishments to 437 establishments. It represents 6.1% of regional GDP and exceeds the national growth rate at 4% over the last decade. As of 2024Q4, the region's light manufacturing generates \$1,232.4 million out-of-region purchases. Notable manufacturing activities in Region 9 by 2024 employment include, but are not limited to, beverage manufacturing, electronics related to the aerospace and biomedical industries, and wood product manufacturing.

EMPLOYMENT



8,934

Regional employment / 8,688,923 in the nation

WAGES



\$64,737

Avg Wages per Worker / \$87,582 in the nation

1.0% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +0.4% in the U.S.



4.6%

% of Total Employment / 5.2% in the U.S.

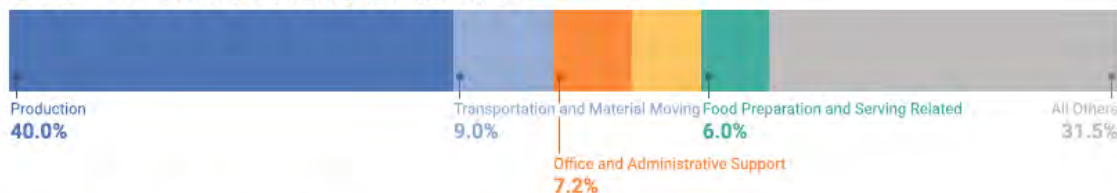


1.9% ↑

Avg Ann % Change Last 10 Years / +3.2% in the U.S.



TOP OCCUPATION GROUPS



TOP INDUSTRIES

Avg Ann % Change in Employment, Last 10 Years

6.5 % ↑



Beverage Manufacturing

0.4 % ↑



Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing

1.3 % ↑



Household and Institutional Furniture and Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturing

Source: JobsEQ®

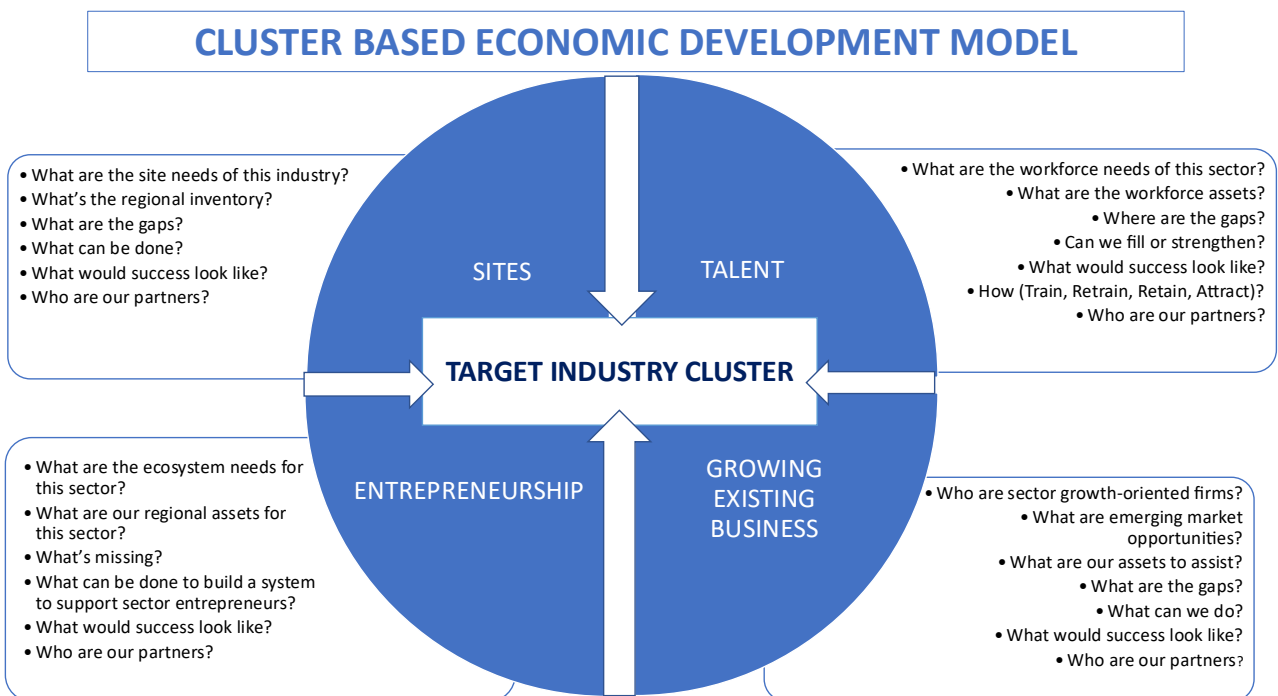
TARGET INDUSTRIES ANALYSIS

Cluster Based Economic Development Model

This section of the report will clarify the approach Region 9 is taking to catalyze growth in the target sectors, as well as identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to those sectors. This informs grant opportunities to impact the target sector in measurable ways.

GO Virginia Region 9 has adopted a Cluster Based Economic Development Model for catalyzing efforts to drive regional competitiveness. Concentrating efforts in traded clusters where a region has or could develop competitive advantages, “fuels the engine” of regional economies leading to increased wages and innovation. This method also helps the Council prioritize investments.

To identify ecosystem gaps in a sector, each strategy is assessed through the questions below:



Grant investments, planning reports, action plans, outcomes, milestones, identified challenges, and feedback from the Region 9 Council and Task Forces informed strategy approaches. Relevant regional planning efforts such as the CEDS, as well as asset announcements, such as the Paul & Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology at UVA, were considered. Status is represented via a "stoplight" that categorizes each cluster:

- **Green:** Stable, adequate investment, evidence of sustainable impact, has momentum
- **Yellow:** Needs support or efforts to catalyze sustainable impact, little momentum
- **Red:** Critical need, pipeline efforts and partner collaboration should be top priority, no momentum

Cluster-Based Economic Development and SWOT by Sector

In this section, each target sector cluster based economic development model is paired with a stakeholder SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and narrative to communicate the cumulative stakeholder feedback for each sector.

Biosciences

The biosciences industry is considered an emerging market, where the sector has experienced a 20% increase in job growth creation and a 30% increase in funding for the sector since 2020. Enhancing capacity within the sector was first identified as a critical need in the 2017 Region 9 Growth Plan. GO Virginia Region 9 invested in three subsequent grants in CvilleBioHub, a regionally focused 501(c)3 non-profit accelerator organization growing the Charlottesville area life sciences industry cluster through entrepreneurship support, company acceleration, and educational initiatives.

Cluster Based Economic Development Model Assessment



\$5,278,827; 5 Projects

Biosciences SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector vertical in CvilleBioHub • Institutional support - Commonwealth Bio Accelerator, UVA, Manning Institute • BioBridge TPI Report forthcoming • Growing companies like Afton Scientific expansion, Bio-Cat • FlexTech R&D Zoning • State support • Increased business attraction inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cville/Albemarle-centric • Education requirement- new pathways needed; entry-level opportunities lacking • High fail rate • Needs venture capital • Companies require significant financial investment • Branding and recognition challenge with competitive established markets like Boston and Research Triangle • Highly specialized talent needs are hard to fill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain students • Retain knowledge workers • State focus and corresponding funding • High-paying • Potential competitive advantage • Scaling commercialization • Statewide collaboration • Expanding coordination among entrepreneur support organization • Smaller markets becoming more appealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal government uncertainty • Highly competitive • Workforce availability • Infrastructure/space • Potential to price out other sectors • Companies that are acquired move

Overall, the biosciences industry is satisfactorily positioned. As it expands, its interconnectedness with industries like light manufacturing may present opportunities to recruit niche manufacturers to address the supply chain issue. CvilleBioHub has established itself as the sector vertical, and articulated its ambitions to elevate the region to compete at an international level. The region is home to other powerhouses in the industry, including the Manning Institute, University of Virginia's significant investments in academic training, research, and incubation, as well as highly engaged thriving businesses fueling the ecosystem.

The Commonwealth Biotech Accelerator was the implementation result of a planning grant, which became a multi-regional collaborative grant known as Project VITAL with over \$14 million GO Virginia funds invested. Region 9 hosts the Commonwealth Biotech Accelerator, a state-of-the-art facility with support services, aiming to catalyze the development and commercialization of cutting-edge biotech solutions, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the sector. It has benefitted from additional state investments.

The BioBridge Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI) aims to bolster the industry's growth rate by ensuring a sufficient workforce within the region to fill biosciences jobs. The project will publish a report of the workforce needs for the cluster, complete with a region-wide asset map and action plan to support high-impact pathway projects for future implementation grants.

With the Commonwealth Biotech Accelerator and BioBridge projects underway, it is expected that the current challenges will be addressed in action plans generated by the projects, or resolved by the outcomes of the projects.

Skills Gaps & Labor Requirements: Biosciences

The BioBridge TPI project has identified the talent landscape and projections related to the life sciences industries, and is in the process of finalizing the stage of employer (demand) side of the analysis. The next stage will be assessing the talent (supply) side. The outcome of this project is a report and action plan.

Central Virginia's Bioscience Industry Employs More than 2,000, has Grown at a Double-Digit Pace Since 2019, Matching Strong National and Statewide Job Growth

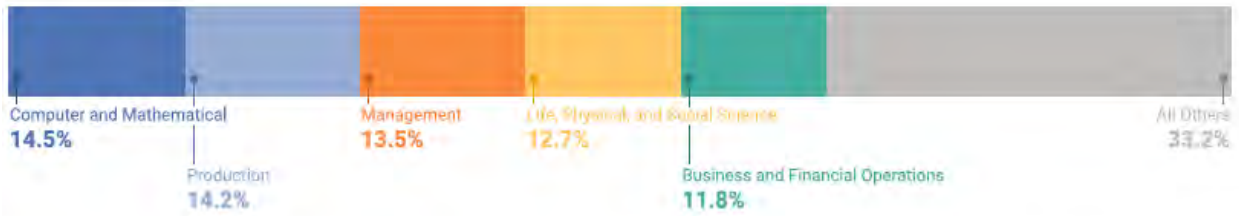
Industry Subsectors	Establishments, 2023	Employment, 2023	VA LQ, 2023	U.S. LQ, 2023	Growth, 2019-23	VA Growth, 2019-23	U.S. Growth, 2019-23
Agricultural Feedstock & Industrial Biosciences	2	16	0.68	0.22	248%	77%	4%
Bioscience-related Distribution	32	348	0.90	0.55	10%	31%	13%
Medical Devices & Equipment	26	360	2.90	0.92	42%	11%	5%
Pharmaceuticals	18	134	1.26	0.39	83%	-10%	13%
Research, Testing, & Medical Laboratories	76	551	1.02	0.71	10%	19%	24%
Digital Health Technology*	24	168	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Colleges and Universities**	30	386	4.22	3.99	-7%	-7%	-14%
Private Hospitals and Outpatient Care**	78	94	0.54	0.43	-22%	-7%	-1%
State and Local Hospitals**	6	169	12.49	5.32	6%	-19%	6%
Bioscience Industry Total (excl. Digital Health)	266	2,058	1.41	0.80	12%	13%	12%
Total Private Employment	15,589	128,973	—	—	2%	3%	4%

Source: TEconomy analysis of Lightcast (2025.1) QCEW data

*Note: Digital Health companies identified and employment data estimated through additional sources, including PitchBook, SBIR/STTR databases, Hoovers D&B, CvilleBioHub.

**Note: Includes only the portion of these sectors engaged in relevant life sciences activities, focused on clinical and life sciences scientific R&D-related personnel (i.e., non-clinical and excluding core teaching faculty).

Staffing Patterns: Biosciences

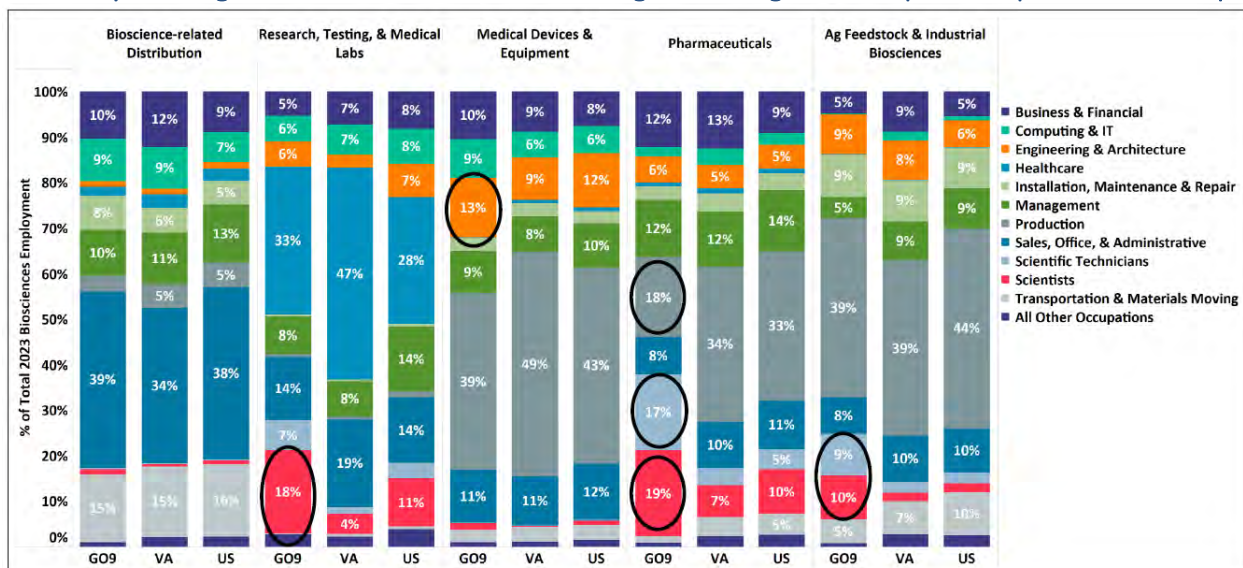


6-digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Annual Demand
Software Developers	225	\$141,000	17
Team Assemblers	101	\$45,100	13
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	98	\$86,700	6
General and Operations Managers	95	\$202,200	9
Managers, All Other	88	\$184,700	7
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	84	\$48,000	10
Project Management Specialists	70	\$123,300	6
Industrial Engineers	60	\$108,200	5
Mechanical Engineers	57	\$107,100	4
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	56	\$98,100	5
Remaining Component Occupations	2,449	\$91,500	237
Total	3,382		

Source: JobsEQ ©

Data reveals five relevant and diversified sector verticals in the region:

Industry Staffing Patterns Reveal Workforce Insights on Region's Unique Occupational Makeup



Source: TEconomy's analysis of Lightcast (2025.1 Datarun) Staffing Patterns

Financial & Business Services

Cluster Based Economic Development Model Assessment

As indicated in the model, no projects have exclusively served the Financial and Business Services cluster, but investments in projects enhancing business-ready sites, talent development and career pathways, as well as entrepreneurship have strengthened the strategies of the industry.



Financial & Businesses Services SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data center revenue • Workforce/education opportunities from CTE, community colleges, UVA • Banking resources for businesses investment • Small business ecosystem • Big revenue impact without resource strain • Boutique hedge firms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of big firms/corporate offices • Citizens opposed to data centers • Infrastructure • ROI on general business services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open jobs • Demand for data centers • Growing sector • Integration with other clusters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting labor shortage • Public sentiment • Tax structure (data centers) • Empty offices • Competing with big finance

Skills Gaps & Labor Requirements: Finance & Business Services

With average annual wages of \$99,299 as of Q2 2024 and the highest forecasted demand of all target sectors based on exits and transfers of 3,560, the talent shortage in this sector is critical. The region's major university system is preparing students for careers in the field, but as a globally-facing institution, University of Virginia prepares its students for placements in major financial markets, like New York and Chicago. GO Virginia invested in a talent project aimed to increase retention of these students, with Tech Talent Retention, which served this and the IT sectors, and closed in 2024. The project committed to 55 jobs created and actualized 7. The chief challenge was identified as lack of project team influence on hiring decisions, and limited ability to track placements. Along these lines, a key finding of the project was a misalignment of the goal for a structural support model, because of the need for concierge service in placements. Embedded pathways from education to employers need to be strengthened, and those solutions

exist in career placement offices of institutions. One of the projects activities, TechLink, continues to attract students to local opportunities and leverage the appeal of region as a top-ranked place to live according to Livability Magazine (2022). The project team identified the opportunity is in recruiting students after their post-entry career placements, as in the finance sector, a defining career credential is in major corporate headquarter placements which students seek as first jobs. As indicated in the SWOT and project portfolio assessment, additional capacity is needed in the finance and business services workforce.

Staffing Patterns: Financial & Business Services



6-digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Annual Demand
Software Developers	1,228	\$132,400	92
Management Analysts	1,066	\$124,100	99
Accountants and Auditors	682	\$91,900	58
Managers, All Other	674	\$139,300	57
General and Operations Managers	623	\$159,500	58
Lawyers	557	\$171,200	23
Customer Service Representatives	482	\$45,500	64
Insurance Sales Agents	438	\$77,800	38
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	378	\$80,100	38
Office Clerks, General	371	\$45,100	43
Remaining Component Occupations	12,886	\$74,300	1,244
Total	19,385		

Source: JobsEQ ©

Food & Beverage Manufacturing

Food and Beverage Manufacturing has the highest location quotient in Region 9. However, it has the perennial challenge of the lowest wages of the target industries, contributing to its workforce challenges. Investments in this industry help to bridge the urban-rural economic gaps facing the region. As expressed in a stakeholder meeting of economic developers, the sector is the darling within the region, with the farm-to-table capacity, marrying farmers to manufacturers, distributors, and customers within the region and across state lines.

Cluster Based Economic Development
Model Assessment



\$882,199; 6 Projects

US Food & Beverage Production Overview, 2023

NAICS	Description	Jobs	5-Year Change	Establishments
	Agriculture & Fishing	1,368,035	0%	82,770
1110	Crop Production	877,269	2%	51,856
1120	Animal Production	462,940	(3%)	28,666
1141	Fishing	27,826	(6%)	2,248
	Food & Beverage Processing	2,116,803	10%	56,905
3111	Animal Food Mfg.	74,852	17%	2,808
3112	Grain and Oilseed Milling	65,472	7%	1,211
3113	Sugar and Confectionery Product Mfg.	82,532	7%	2,309
3114	Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Mfg.	177,864	3%	2,777
3115	Dairy Product Mfg.	167,274	13%	2,645
3116	Animal Slaughtering and Processing	553,679	6%	4,566
3117	Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging	33,982	(3%)	851
3118	Bakeries and Tortilla Mfg.	365,059	9%	15,586
3119	Other Food Mfg.	262,713	16%	8,041
3121	Beverage Mfg.	333,376	23%	16,112
	Total	3,484,838	6%	139,675

Source: Lightcast

Source: Camoin Associations, <https://camoinassociates.com/resources/food-and-beverage-production-sector-trends/>

National trends to consider are that from 2018-2023, there was 10% job growth in the Food and Beverage sector, adding 200,000 jobs, compared to almost no growth in agriculture and fishing industries. Comparatively, job growth across all sectors in the US was 4%. Beverage manufacturing was the strongest subsector, growing at 23%, adding over 63,000 jobs. Breweries accounted for just over half of the growth in the last five years.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) plan emphasizes controlled environment agriculture (CEA) as a pathway to higher wages and economic investment. This ag-tech subset was identified in the 2023 Growth Plan Update for prioritization. Investing in resilient agriculture initiatives like CEA are a central strategy in ensuring sustainability of the sector. Given the upskill required for roles in ag-tech, the wage dilemma may improve. Several recently closed and active GO Virginia-funded projects have addressed the actionable items of the CEDS Food & Beverage Manufacturing strategies including:

- BEACON’s Kitchen
- Carver Food Business Enterprise
- Food & Beverage Accelerator Planning Grant
- Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative
- Rural Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Connector
- Talent Supply Connector

Food & Beverage Manufacturing SWOT

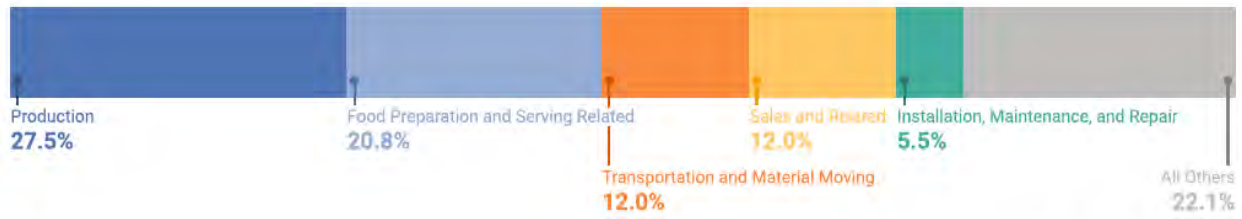
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration of companies • Visibility • Natural resources – climate, soil • Talent pool • Nimble operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth limitations due to site/land availability • Other regions more competitive • Low wages • Seasonal aspect • Difficult to connect to higher education • Water as utility can be a barrier • Regulations restrict K-12 integration • Most companies are small • Many companies prefer to stay small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National recognition in wine production • Controlled environment agriculture emerging industry; potential for higher wages • Highest LQ • VTOP support • Food & Beverage Accelerator Study in progress • Some company peer groups exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce • Wages • Cost of land • Weather volatility • Labor regulations • Industry regulators • Downsizing by larger companies • Lack of workforce coordination

The primary threat to the industry is the rising cost of land. The region is competitive with more expensive and land-scarce markets like northern Virginia, but other regions are more competitive in land prices, and there is the threat of scaling out of state due to land availability and affordability elsewhere.

Skills Gaps & Labor Requirements: Food & Beverage Manufacturing

As indicated by the red Talent categorization on the SWOT, this industry needs support to align pathways, partners, and workforce needs. Institutional stakeholders, like community colleges and VCW-Piedmont, lack capacity to lead coordination efforts across the system.

Staffing Patterns: Food & Beverage Manufacturing



6-digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Annual Demand
Bartenders	218	\$48,200	45
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	216	\$46,300	29
Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	176	\$51,400	19
Waiters and Waitresses	137	\$42,500	34
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	93	\$39,000	13
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	90	\$64,700	10
Demonstrators and Product Promoters	88	\$36,900	19
Retail Salespersons	81	\$37,100	15
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	78	\$45,800	13
Bakers	66	\$34,700	12
Remaining Component Occupations	1,416	\$70,200	200
Total	2,660		

Source: JobsEQ ©

Industry Spotlight: Wineries in GO Virginia Region 9

In 2023, the Wine Industry Planning Grant sought to identify the barriers to making the region's wine industry a traded sector, and strengthen exports. An implementation grant followed in 2025. Region 9 employs 41% of the state's workers in this industry and it has 34% of the state's wineries. In 2023 there were 62 wineries in the region, an increase of 20 over a decade. With a location quotient of 12.51, the region's title by Wine Enthusiast's "Wine Region of the Year, 2023" is statistically validated. GO Virginia investments are yielding impact, with new collaborations, business expansions, and jobs growth attributed to the current implementation project.



Source: JobsEQ © 2024Q4

IT & Communications

Region 9's mix of rural and urban areas presents challenges in many target sector occupations where the infrastructure and workforce is primarily urban. Information Technology presents an opportunity to diversify rural economies. Opportunities exist in digital subsectors and interconnect with other regional target industry jobs, such as regional broadband deployment, which will bridge the digital divide between rural and urban communities.

Cluster Based Economic Development Model Assessment



IT & Communications SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiber connectivity Available workforce High wages Future-ready sector (AI) Land availability Power corridors available Federal facilities (dark fiber) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of workforce/talent to grow Lack of critical mass concentration Start-up rather than established firms Negative perception of data centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UVA talent pipeline Strong designations in some localities could attract workforce VEDP Knowledge Work priority R&D integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchased by venture capital and relocated Challenge to retain businesses Remote work – people don't need to live here

The region boasts a solid fiber infrastructure and available workforce for the sector. Data centers are carefully considered by localities, based on energy resources, community concerns and site availability.

Recent announcements of record-setting investments in the region have energized conversations and efforts around data centers on the local economy. The Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap Planning Grant is convening entities, ideas, and discussions around the IT & Communications assets and trajectories, with a report due in 2027, and expected implementation project to follow.

Skills Gaps & Labor Requirements: IT & Communications

With average wages exceeding \$102,000, the IT & Communications sector makes a strong appeal for future workforce members. Similar to Finance & Business Services, competition for the locally educated talent pool is global. Unknowns, such as the impact of AI on jobs, have facilitated efforts to form coalitions around identifying the future of workforce in this sector. There may be opportunity for a grant proposal to address the current and future needs of this ever-evolving industry.

As evidenced by the following chart on staffing patterns, there are specific shortages. This presents an opportunity for community colleges and for employers to increase high school/community college direct to employer recruitment and training.

Staffing Patterns: IT & Communications



6-digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Annual Demand
Software Developers	1,252	\$127,700	97
Management Analysts	860	\$127,500	81
Electricians	732	\$67,400	79
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	524	\$62,600	52
Managers, All Other	467	\$166,600	40
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	438	\$63,400	42
General and Operations Managers	404	\$177,900	39
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	334	\$97,400	36
Project Management Specialists	302	\$116,500	26
Computer User Support Specialists	249	\$67,900	20
Remaining Component Occupations	7,745	\$81,700	759
Total	13,306		

Source: JobsEQ ©

Anecdotally, project teams and outcomes reflect a different reality than the data narrative. The demand in the IT & Communications sectors is less critical and more nuanced than the data indicates. AI is reshaping workforce projections, creating uncertainty, and presenting opportunities for innovation in the sector. While software developers are indicated as the most in-demand occupation, employers have expressed they see these positions consolidating significantly with AI. Computer Science graduates are experiencing challenges in job placements.

Light Manufacturing

As demonstrated in the model, scaling presents a major challenge. Supply chain integration lacks regional efficiency which limits market expansion. Existing collaborations between academic and research institutions, business infrastructure, scaling support, and workforce skills lacks cohesion.

The CEDS plan championed clean energy as an opportunity for the region to become a national hub for research and development, capitalizing on research institutions like University of Virginia, technology companies, and start-ups, outlining four actions:

1. Develop a clean energy technology sector plan in Region 9 that focuses on R&D, innovation, and product manufacturing.
2. Focus on building support for clean energy R&D and small-scale manufacturing initiatives.
3. Support university-based collaboratives to advance R&D in commercial applications.
4. Evaluate and build out the clean energy supply chain.

*Cluster Based Economic Development
Model Assessment*



\$694,503; 3 Projects

Light Manufacturing SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional – serves urban and rural • Available land • Resilient sector • Talent Pathways established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available space • Decreasing jobs • Low wages • Sparse utilities • Requires specialized training • Fragmented cluster • Need more companies for robust market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niche products • Research out of UVA • Shannon Hill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty at federal level • Wage trends outpacing • Aging workforce, young people not entering • Difficult to find workers

Skills Gaps & Labor Requirements: Light Manufacturing

Projects serving the Light Manufacturing sector have yielded high volumes in businesses served (121), but only seven jobs as of Q4 2024. Two talent development projects serving the sector, Talent Supply Connector and Tech Talent Retention, experienced shortfalls in projected job creation. Project teams cited two central challenges: 1) project team lacked hiring decision influence, affecting the number of their program participants selected as candidates and 2) outcomes are two years out as high schoolers in the career pathways programs move from apprenticeships/internships to employees. Therefore, while the job outcomes are relatively low, it is not an indicator of this sector lacking persons to fill open positions once the pipeline is filled with candidates currently being prepared to fill those roles.

Staffing Patterns: Light Manufacturing



6-digit Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages	Annual Demand
Team Assemblers	516	\$42,700	64
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	283	\$70,900	28
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	239	\$41,000	35
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	234	\$46,000	31
Bartenders	218	\$48,200	45
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	203	\$54,400	24
General and Operations Managers	202	\$142,700	19
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	201	\$72,900	20
Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	183	\$45,600	23
Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	178	\$51,300	19
Remaining Component Occupations	6,455	\$71,700	725
Total	8,911		

Source: JobsEQ ©

Manufacturing is a declining industry. However, clean energy is transitioning from an emerging to leading industry with a high location quotient and increasing jobs. Early stage exploration of the sector reveals a high concentration of start-up R&D clean-energy companies, with 12 in Charlottesville alone; however, the NAICS coding of 23 nests these jobs under construction, so traded sector status is unclear. The [Catalysis Initiative for Clean Energy and Chemicals](#) embeds additional potential for supported growth. The recently approved Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap planning grant may define opportunities within this sector. Federal policy changes have presented onshoring opportunities in this already diverse sector. Stakeholder feedback indicates municipalities must improve upon speed and costs associated with due diligence to attract businesses to the region.

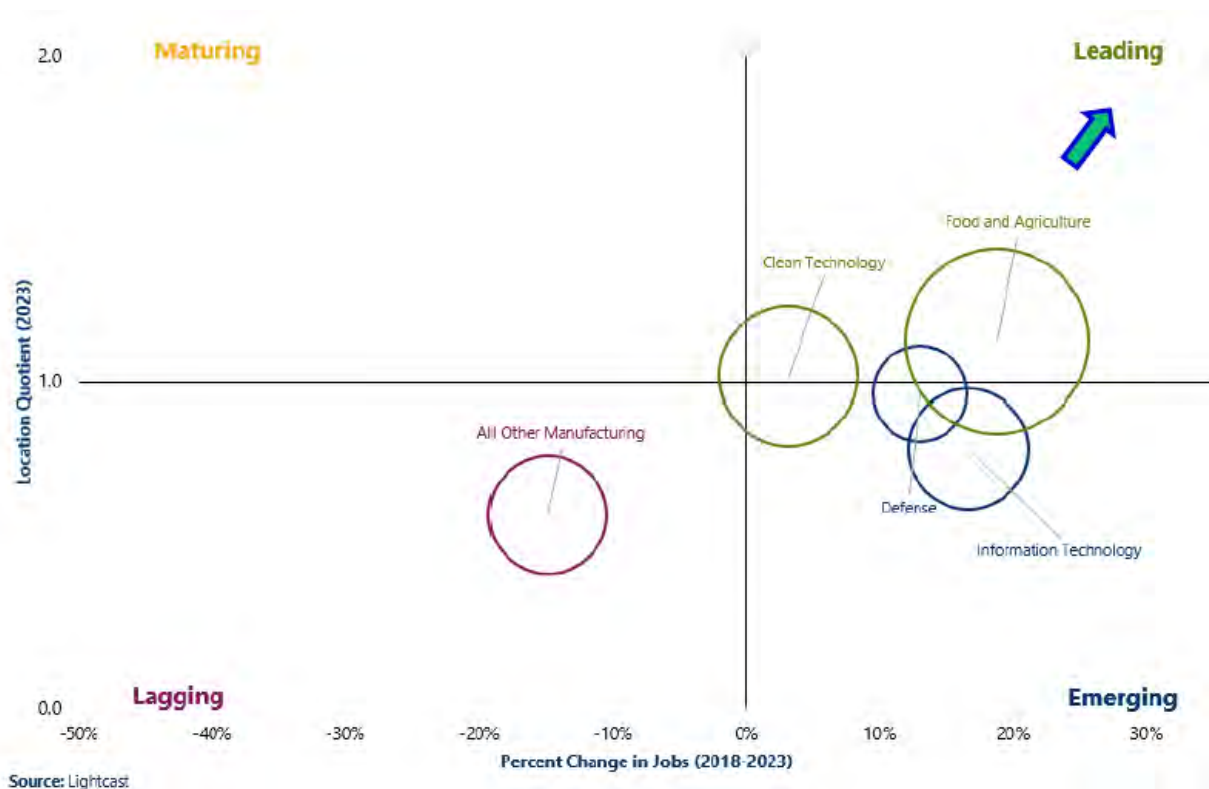
Emerging Industries

To be prepared to adapt this plan to future opportunities, the Council is open to exploring emerging industries by awarding planning grants to organizations with the expertise to evaluate their potential impact for this region. Such planning grants should include cluster assessments in the region or sub-regions and identify gaps in talent, sites and entrepreneurship that are barriers to scaling and expanding competitive advantages.

The GO Virginia Region 9 Super-Regional Strategies developed as part of the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) and Thomas Jefferson Planning District (TJPD) CEDS 2024 Report identified the following sectors as leading and emerging industries in Region 9:

1. Food and Agriculture
2. Clean Technology
3. Information Technology
4. Defense & National Security

The following chart plots these industries with indication of location quotient (LQ) and job increases. LQ measures industry concentration relative to geography, whereas an LQ of 1 or greater indicates employability in that sector exceeds the state average. All four super regional sectors have significant job growth exceeding state averages, with Food and Agriculture at 19% in Region 9 compared to 5% statewide; Information Technology at 17% regionally compared to 7% statewide; Defense at 13% compared to 1%, and Clean Technology at 3% compared to 2% (Lightcast, 2024). Bubble size indicates 2023 job count.



Industry Growth Trends in GO Virginia Region 9

A recently approved planning grant, Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap, will take a deeper dive into established and emerging industries in order to identify areas where the region has a global strategic advantage and that represent new growth opportunities. Specifically, the domains of life sciences/biotech and digital/IT (data science, AI, autonomy, advanced materials, cybersecurity, etc.) with commercial and national security applications, or the “Core Areas” will be analyzed for growth opportunity. Based on the Region 9 assets, as well as regional, national, and global industry trends, the consultant will recommend strategic priorities and specific actions to be taken to realize opportunities for regional growth and cluster development in the Core Areas. The overall vision is to identify the region’s global strategic advantage.

There has been historic public and private sector investment in Region 9 in life science and digital and IT domains in the last two years, with applications across the Core Areas.” The project goal is to:

- identify the region’s competitive advantage in life science and digital/IT technologies
- gain a line-of-sight to economic growth opportunities, and
- create a strategic roadmap with actionable steps for intentional economic growth.

The region’s economy is built upon a dynamic stream of continuous innovation that attracts high-quality investment in our area and prioritizes well paying, career ladder jobs. Region 9 possesses an extensive base of assets that create a comparative advantage for the region to compete for global leadership at the nexus of biotech, data science, trusted AI and autonomy, advanced materials, and cybersecurity. These assets span infrastructure, talent, and entrepreneurship.

Regional Capacity to Train Workers

Increasing access to training through industry-led initiatives in collaboration with public, private, and nonprofit sectors to create a more equitable and resilient workforce was identified as an essential priority for the region in the CEDS plans. Upskilling to achieve economic mobility in diverse communities, both urban and rural, is imperative to the talent pool needed for area industries. These concerns were captured in the eighth goal of the CEDS plan to “Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline.” Several closed and active GO Virginia Region 9 projects are addressing the action plan items within this goal.

Occupation Distribution in GO Virginia - Region 9, Baseline, 2024Q2

Industry	Current		2-Year Demand			
	Employment	Average Annual Wages	Exits	Transfers	Employment Growth	Total Demand
Biosciences	3,346	\$102,395	192	369	64	625
Financial and Business Services	19,098	\$99,299	1,254	2,011	293	3,560
Food and Beverage Manufacturing	2,612	\$37,294	273	435	100	808
IT/Communications	13,325	\$101,154	786	1,440	309	2,539
Light Manufacturing	8,885	\$64,859	712	1,196	150	2,059
TOTAL	47,266	\$ 81,000	3,216	5,451	915	9,592

Source: JobsEQ®

The region houses a capable higher education network, including Germanna Community College, Laurel Ridge Community College, Piedmont Virginia Community College, and University of Virginia. These institutions have partnered on numerous projects, for example: Laurel Ridge Community College hosts the drone certification program created by the Tech Academies grant; PVCC closely followed the Wine Industry Planning and Implementation Grants in order to shape its curriculum to support industry efforts to ready the workforce. The Talent Supply Connector project launched a pilot internship and apprenticeship program in local schools to prepare students for careers in food and beverage manufacturing and light manufacturing, which continues to expand to districts in the region.

A recognized challenge in the region is coordination of effort around workforce development. In the process of searching for an organization to take on the Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI), it was evident there was not an entity with capacity to take on a regional strategy. CvilleBioHub emerged as an applicant for TPI, focusing on employment within the biotech vertical. The synergy of CvilleBioHub has served as an inspirational model for other target sectors, a finding echoed in the Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative's Report and Action Plan, which articulated the desire to launch hubs to support entrepreneurial efforts in other industries. This led to the Food and Beverage Accelerator Planning Grant, which may establish itself as the hub to various spokes that are already established in that industry. The Tech Talent Retention project spawned TechLink, aimed at pipelining UVA grads into local Finance and Business and IT positions.

Therefore, the capacity to train workers is solid. Project outcomes are indicating sector verticals are the means of coordinating workforce development. With projects having already developed the template for industry-informed preparation of the K-12 and college-bound workforce, new hubs will be able to scale efficiently. The opportunity lies in communication, as the feedback loop does have flaws. Community college to internship pipelines need to be strengthened. The initial Growth Plan identified communication within the talent development system as challenge, and positioned Virginia Career Works – Piedmont (VCW-P) as the central workforce authority on the talent development ecosystem strategy. VCW-P is hosting coalitions for the Light Manufacturing and Food & Beverage Industries, which connects employers and educational institutions, allowing for nimble responses to articulated challenges.

INVENTORY OF SITES

The GO Virginia program has impacted Region 9 by providing funding for site development. The CVPED identifies limited site inventory as a barrier to business attraction. According to the 2024 CEDS planning efforts, additional shovel-ready sites are needed region-wide for growth. The report highlights that securing and preparing large properties is a lengthy process, requiring analysis to identify future opportunities.

Since 2017, the Region 9 Council has invested funds and grants to characterize and advance site development. Region 9 lacked any sites above Tier 2, falling short of demand and costing opportunities. The table below reflects site dollars invested and the indirect impact from hosting the ongoing conversation about site readiness. Not all projects that have advanced have done so with GO Virginia funding.

Advancement of Sites Since GO Virginia Investments

Region 9 Sites	As of 8/2017	8/2017 – 8/ 2018	9/2018 - 8/2021	As of 8/19/2025
# of Tier 4 Sites	0	4	0	2
# of Tier 4 Sites > 100 acres	0	2	0	1
# of Tier 4 Site Acres		598	0	274
# of Tier 3 Sites	0	2	1	3
# of Tier 3 Sites Acres	0	182	700	298.8
# of Acres moved up at least one tier in Virginia Business Ready Sites Program	0	1,212	700	See **
# of Acres impacted by GO Virginia \$		485	700	1,235
# of Sites impacted by GO Virginia \$		8	1	10
# of Total Acres Characterized Tier 3-4	0	1,212	700	1,962
# of Total Sites Characterized Tier 3-4	0	11	2	14

*Accelerating grant was completed after August of 2021. However, those numbers were reflected in 2021 chart. Shannon Hill Regional Business Park received two grants and was not double-counted. One moved them to a Tier 3 and the next moved them to an undocumented Tier 4.

**North Fork increased again to a pad-ready Tier 5 site for 14 acres. Shannon Hill Regional Business Park advanced from Tier 3 to 4 and was sold.

Notable announcements include the following:

- August 2023: MITRE leased 16 acres, TE Lee Lot 10, characterized as a Tier 4 site as part of 2018 Site Readiness grant.
- November 2023: DataBank purchased Red Ace in Culpeper County for \$41M; 85 acres that was part of 2021 Accelerating Sites grant.
- June 2025: EdgeCore purchases all of 697 acres of Shannon Hill Regional Business Park for \$42 million (total investment is \$17 Billion).
- Rivanna Futures: Albemarle County awarded a grant to advance 50 acres to Tier 4
- GO Virginia grants helped position 3 significant Virginia Business Ready Sites grants:
 - \$11.59 M for Shannon Hill in 2023

- \$3 M for North Fork in 2023
- \$9.7 M for Rivanna Futures in 2025

The main opportunity lies in identifying new sites and advancing those to attract businesses across sectors. The CEDS identifies three actions in its goal to enhance site readiness:

1. Advance municipal support for existing and new sites.
2. Streamline infrastructure-related approval processes.
3. Retain an engineering firm to identify new sites and planned future development.

Region 9's Sites Task Force is complementing efforts of strategies 1 and 3.

Site readiness is tracked in collaboration with the CVPED. The CVPED team has advised that due to the lack of site inventory they do not necessarily identify specific targets for each site and therefore are open to all opportunities.

Available Characterized Sites by VBRSP Tier GO Virginia Region 9

Site	Locality	Tier	Contiguous Acres	Target Sector
North Fork - Ready Site 8	Albemarle	5*	14	All
North Fork - UVA Discovery Park	Albemarle	4	253	All
Villages at Terrace Greene	Greene	4**	21	All
Shannon Hill Reg Business Park	Louisa	3	400	All
South Park Centre	Madison	3	17	All
Wingspread Industrial Site	Culpeper	3	135	All
Academy Business Park	Fluvanna	2	412	All
Austin Land and Cattle Site	Louisa	2	75	All
Catlett Station II	Fauquier	2	60	All
Culpeper/Route 29 Ltd Partnership	Culpeper	2	239	All
Dalro Site	Culpeper	2	38	All
Early Family Property	Fauquier	2	81	All
Fork Union Business Park	Fluvanna	2	62	All
JJCS Investments	Fauquier	2	48	All
Newman Property	Fauquier	2	34	All
Remington Business Park	Fauquier	2	62	All
SLC Financial	Culpeper	2	42	All
Spring Creek Business Park	Louisa	2	39	All
13200 Willow Run Drive Site	Culpeper	1	33	All
Alexander-Williams	Fluvanna	1	75	All
Pendelton Rail Site	Louisa	1	75	All
King Property	Orange	1	750	All
TOTAL			2,965	

*VBRSP rated 4 but pad-ready has marketing as 5; **VBRSP rated 2 but site improvements make it 4

Source: Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, Fauquier County Economic Development, as of 2.28.2025

ACTIVITIES AND METRICS

To catalyze growth of Region 9's target sectors, the council will seek grant proposals that align with Region 9's goals by advancing strategic objectives through specific grant activities. The grant activities required are called Growth Plan Opportunities.

In determining the 2025 Growth Plan Opportunities the existing 2023 opportunities were reviewed against ecosystem changes and Region 9 project impacts. Some opportunities have been achieved and will therefore roll off the list, while others were carried forward or revised. Opportunities were added to address newly identified gaps. Finally, with input from stakeholders, subject matter experts and public comment, the new opportunities were identified. The following table details this evaluation.

The final 2025 Growth Plan Opportunities are listed in the report section after this table.

2023 Growth Plan Opportunities	Status* / Sectors	Grant Activities	NEW 2025 Growth Plan Opportunities
TALENT DEVELOPMENT (TD) Objective: Strengthen the talent pipeline in target industry sectors by encouraging collaboration among education, business, and workforce partners to develop in-demand skills, retain local talent, and attract new talent to the region. Metrics: people trained, job placements, businesses served, new interns placed, new apprenticeships, new programs, awarded credentials and/or dual enrollment completion.			
Build a comprehensive regional workforce coalition or initiative to drive collaboration and efficiency in the Region 9 talent development ecosystem for target sectors.	In progress All sectors		Carry forward and refine to allow for regional or sub-region efforts, if validated. (TD Opportunity #1)
Drive target sector talent pathways planning efforts as described in the Region 9 Request for Letters of Interest for the Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI) planning grants.	Advanced Biosciences, Financial & Business Services, IT & Comm	The BioBridge report due by end of 2025 will deliver a talent pathway plan for the Bio sector. Tech Talent Retention established a conduit from UVA to Financial & Businesses Services and IT & Comm. sectors via TechLink, to increase placements of UVA students in local roles.	Opportunity to model the BioBridge Talent Pathway planning approach for other sectors. (TD Opportunity #3)
Develop sector-driven credentialing, apprenticeship, and internship programs for target industries	Advanced Food & Beverage Mfg., Light Mfg.	The Talent Supply Connector project connected students to internships leading to employment upon high school graduation.	Expand opportunity for all sectors; add references to upskilling; include career introduction in middle school (i.e. GO TEC); and better translation of

			employer needs between business and community colleges (TD Opportunity #5)
Evaluate and/or drive strategies to address regional demand for software developers (SOC-15-1252)	Advanced IT & Comm.	Tech Talent Retention project targeted this occupation. AI Landscape Assessment (AISLA) with the VA Chamber Blueprint will provide opportunities to address AI talent gaps.	This recommendation is revised for 2025, as AI reshapes the field. Feedback has been early career software developers most affected by AI. Efforts should be on high demand occupations. (TD Opportunity #6)
			Add an opportunity to study how to prepare workforce for the growing demand of AI skills. (TD Opportunity #2)
			Add opportunity for career engagement in middle school through high school. (TD Opportunity #4)
<p align="center">GROW EXISTING BUSINESS (GEB)</p> <p>Objective: Enable the adoption of advanced technologies, foster scale-up of high-growth firms, enhance supply chain integration, and strengthen cluster ecosystems.</p> <p>Metrics: jobs created, businesses attracted existing businesses expanded, businesses served and/or funds raised</p>			
For each target cluster, re-evaluate industries within each cluster as defined in 2017 and identify gaps in growth to develop recommendations for future implementation grants. (i.e. using Cluster Based Economic Development Model, DHCD, 2023)	Advanced All sectors	The Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative Action Plan has recommended paths for scaling regional target clusters. The CEDS Super Regional Strategy led to a planning grant for a Food & Beverage Business Accelerator . The Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap will yield implementation proposals for high growth or emerging sectors.	Opportunity for other target or emerging sectors to use this model. (GEB Opportunity #1)
Support implementation grants from gaps identified through planning grants or other regional reports such as the CEDS Plans to be published in 2024	Advanced Food & Beverage Mfg.	The Wine Industry Implementation Grant is supporting a coalition to strengthen the sector and expand exports across state lines.	Carry forward as implementation proposals expected from active planning activities. (GEB Opportunity #2)
Support sector-led	Advanced	CvilleBioHub serves as	Carry forward but eliminate

verticals to address business-identified and validated sector gaps to traded sector growth	Biosciences, Food & Beverage Mfg.	vertical in biotech and is leading, CvilleBioLab , a wet lab accelerator, as well as a larger Commonwealth funded initiative to expand available wet lab space. They are also addressing the talent pipeline through the BioBridge TPI . The Food & Beverage Accelerator is exploring the path for a similar sector effort The action plan leading to the Wine Industry Implementation Grant is organizing Virginia's winemaker stakeholders.	the confusing vertical reference. (GEB Opportunity #3)
Support implementation of a biotech wet lab accelerator/incubator model to support expansion in the sector.	Achieved Biosciences	CvilleBioLab has received additional support from the state and UVA to expand and sustain wet lab space.	Opportunity no longer needed due to extraordinary achievements of this effort over the last 8 years.
ENTREPRENEURSHIP (E-SHIP) Objective: Drive innovation and entrepreneurship in target sectors by advancing startup formation, research commercialization, and the development of innovation networks. Metrics: jobs created, businesses expanded, new businesses created, businesses served, new mentors, funds raised, new products released, patents filed and/or patents awarded			
Support recommended implementation grants that catalyze growth in target sector entrepreneurship as prioritized in the Regional Entrepreneurship Investment (REI) Plan in development.	Advanced All sectors	The REI Action Plan identified 8 gaps and recommendations for implementation grants. One resulting grant is active now: Food & Beverage Accelerator .	Add feasible recommendations from the REI action plan as opportunities. (E-ship Opportunities 1, 2, 3)
SITES Objective: Support strategic site development for target sectors to enable business attraction, expansion, and cluster growth. Metrics: acreage advanced on VBRSP, acreage impacted or developed, increases locality engagement, expanded on-site infrastructure and/or middle mile broadband			
Develop a plan for regional site development with a goal of identifying priority target sector sites in the region and a sustainable plan for advancing a portfolio of			Carry forward with simplified language (Sites Opportunity #3)

sites and a regular cadence for site projects.			
Support future planning and/or implementation projects identified in the regional sites plan			Carry forward (Sites Opportunity #4)
Evaluate strategic advances for site development collaboration	Advanced Biosciences, Financial & Business Services, IT & Comm., Light Mfg.	Rivanna Futures project team demonstrated sub-regional collaboration	Carry forward and combine with RIFA opportunity: Evaluate strategic opportunities for site development collaboration, including RIFAs. (Sites Opportunity #5)
Drive the continued development of regionally prioritized sites	Advanced Biosciences, Financial & Business Services, IT & Comm., Light Mfg.	Rivanna Futures	Carry forward for new sites. (Sites Opportunity #1)
Evaluate RIFA development opportunity			Combined with above (Sites Opportunity #5)
			Opportunity to identify new raw land for future sites in the region. (Sites Opportunity #2)
OTHER			
Support planning grants to assess, map, and support the development of emerging industries for which this region may have a competitive advantage using Cluster Based Economic Development Model, DHCD, 2023) (i.e., Ag-Tech, Clean Energy, etc.)	Advanced Biosciences, Financial & Business Services, IT & Comm., Light Mfg.	Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap Planning Grant will identify emerging industries for which the region has a global strategic advantage.	Carry forward and eliminate reference to cluster based economic development model due to confusion. (Other Opportunity #1)
Support implementation grants identified in the above reports.		An implementation proposal is expected from the Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap Report .	Carry forward. (Other Opportunity #2)

***Status: Advanced:** Opportunity advanced through a grant but not yet achieved; **In-progress:** other activities in the ecosystem have advanced the opportunity; **Achieved:** Opportunity has been achieved through an awarded grant or other initiative

2025 GROWTH PLAN OPPORTUNITIES

The GO Virginia Region 9 Council invites grant proposals that deliver outcomes for the Region 9 target sectors of *Biosciences; Financial & Business Services; Food & Beverage Manufacturing; Information Technology & Communication or Light Manufacturing*



Talent Development

1. Establish workforce coalition(s) or initiatives that enhance collaboration and efficiency within the Region 9 talent development ecosystem for target sectors regionally or subregional.
2. Grow an AI-ready workforce to advance the competitiveness of region 9's target sectors informed by the AISLA Project Blueprint Report. (Fall 2025)
3. Advance sector-specific talent pathways planning efforts, ensuring the alignment of education and training with industry specified needs in each target sector.
4. Implement talent pathway strategies spanning from middle school career awareness to senior-level employment opportunities
5. Develop sector-driven credentialing, micro-credentialing, apprenticeship, upskilling, and internship (high school, adult) programs designed to meet the demands of target industries
6. Assess and address regional target sector workforce needs to fill high demand occupations



Grow Existing Business

1. For each target cluster, re-evaluate member industries within each cluster as defined and identify gaps in growth to develop recommendations for future implementation grants.
2. Support implementation grants from gaps identified through planning grants or other regional reports
3. Support sector led initiatives that address business-validated sector gaps to traded sector growth.
4. Catalyze AI & technology adoption in target sectors that drive sector growth and competitiveness



Entrepreneurship

1. Expand the number of sector specific industry support organizations (peer groups) that will provide mentorship, education, community, and resource exchange for target sectors entrepreneur leaders.
2. Establish coordinated sector specific incubators or accelerators when demand is validated
3. Widen founder education about capital sources and connect more capital



Sites

1. Advance development of regionally significant sites.
2. Identify new potential sites in the region for these sectors.
3. Create a regional site development plan for target sectors.
4. Support future projects from the regional sites plan, once completed.
5. Assess benefits of collaboration on site development, such as RIFA development opportunities.



Other

1. Support planning grants to assess, map, and catalyze growth in emerging industries for which the region may have a competitive advantage
2. Support implementation grants that address recommendations identified in emerging industries planning grants

EFFORTS AND SUCCESS MEASURES

In the upcoming year, the Council plans to evaluate and support proposals from four active planning grants: BioBridge TPI, Food & Beverage Business Accelerator, Innovation Corridor Roadmap, and Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative (REI). There is also consideration for developing sites projects. The Region 9 Council will facilitate project development through Task Forces, which review proposals, oversee engagement, and coordinate collaborative activities under each strategy.

There will be continued emphasis on prioritizing planning grants ahead of implementation grants unless an organized planning effort has been undertaken.

Council Activities to Develop Project Pipeline

To drive a pipeline of projects for grant funding, the Council staff, Council and Task Forces will:

- Support coalition building for sectors to address gaps in talent, entrepreneurship, site readiness and grow existing business
- Support convening of entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders to ensure programming and funding is optimized
- Support a regular cadence of conversations and activities to support collaboration to drive review and prioritization of a portfolio of regional sites
- Engage stakeholders to identify and support evaluation of high growth emerging traded sectors
- Collaborate with other regional teams and councils to identify opportunities

Measures of Success

For the region to be successful target industries must grow their employment base, expand within the region, attract more related businesses or supply chain. To measure success the Council will track the following in their annual report delivered in June.

The goal is to achieve growth of target sector employment. The goal can be accomplished by supporting site development, talent and workforce program delivery, and supporting the entrepreneurship ecosystem of these sectors.

- Employment Growth by Target Sector

- Employment Growth for All Sectors
- Average Annual Wage Growth by Target Sector
- Average Annual Wage Growth by All Sectors
- Expanding Target Sector Business Announcements: Job Commitment and Capital Investment
- New Target Sector Businesses Announcements: Job Commitment and Capital Investment
- Committed Outcomes vs Actual by Strategy for All Closed Projects
- Committed Outcomes vs Actual by Strategy Year to Date by Active Projects

Partnerships

Efforts will continue to either establish or strengthen relationships between higher education, local government and the private sector. However, there are many other additional partners and organizations that must be engaged for regional impact. This list is not exhaustive.

Local Government and Economic Development Organizations

- Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development: The support organization for Region 9 is an important partner for relationship building and driving regional conversations.
- County Administrators and Economic Development Departments: Administrators and Economic Development Directors serve on the Central Virginia Partnership Board and/or the Region 9 Council. All eleven localities in Region 9 have been served by or participated in at least one funded grant project.
- Planning Districts: The footprint of Planning District 9 and Planning District 10 align exactly with GO Virginia Region 9 footprint. These organizations help support sub-regional conversations.
- VCW-Piedmont Region: The workforce board in the region continues to grow in impact and the organization should be an important partner for Talent Development projects.

Private Sector

Private sector leaders serve on and contribute to the GO Virginia initiative by serving on the Council, Task Forces and other grant advisory committees. The private sector also drive partnerships in their role on the organizations that lead or contribute to grants. Going forward, more private sector leaders will be engaged as sector specific coalitions are developed.

Higher Education

- Community Colleges: The three community colleges in Region 9, Germanna Community Colleges, Lord Fairfax Community College, and Piedmont Virginia Community College are strongly engaged with the Council. Two of the community college presidents currently serve on the Region 9 Council.
- University of Virginia: UVA has been an important partner on many projects and will

continue to be engaged in collaborative proposals. UVA's assistant vice president for economic development serves on the Region 9 Council and many other faculty and staff help as grant leaders or subject matter experts.

- Chambers: Local, Regional and the State Chambers of Commerce: Chambers, as critical conveners of private sector, are important partners, and local and regional chambers can nominate Council members. The Virginia Chamber is also a partner through the Blueprint Virginia initiative.

State Government

- Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD): As the support organization for the GO Virginia Board, DHCD is the first stop for determining project eligibility and obtaining feedback to improve project proposals.
- Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP): VEDP will continue to have an influence on the direction of site development and target sector alignment statewide.
- Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPIC): A leader in entrepreneurship ecosystem building and will play an important role in serving the region.

Non-profits and other organizations

These groups, many of which are entrepreneurship support organizations, are regular participants in regional activity. These include: 434, Central Virginia Small Business Development Center, Charlottesville Business Innovation Council, Community Investment Collaborative, CvilleBioHub, GENEDGE, Laurel Ridge Small Business Development Center, New Hill Development, and, Venture Central, etc.

Other Initiatives Aligned with GO Virginia

In developing this plan, many other reports that are similarly aligned were reviewed. Examples include: Local Economic Development Strategic Plans, Central Virginia Partnership Strategic Plan, VCW Piedmont Local Plan and Strategic Plan, VEDP's Innovation Framework, CEDS Strategies for Planning District 9 and 10, etc.

Stakeholder Engagement for Growth Plan

Community and stakeholder engagement to inform the Region 9 Growth Plan occurs on a regular cadence throughout the year. The following is a summary of these activities.

- The Region 9 Task Forces, economic developers, and subject matter experts contributed to target sector SWOT analyses.
- The Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative completed ecosystem planning efforts and delivered an action plan in February 2025.
- Throughout the year, Region 9 staff and Council met one-on-one or in group settings with stakeholders to solicit feedback on programmatic activities and grants.
- Staff participate in regular meetings with regional economic development and stakeholders to discuss activities and opportunities.

- Staff regularly met with organizations that directly serve regional sectors, such as CVPED, TJPDC, RRRC, GENEDGE, CvilleBioHub, CIT, entrepreneurship support organizations, etc.
- Region 9 grant implementation teams share updates quarterly to assess the landscape in each sector.
- The Council reviewed JOBS EQ data during Council Meetings to allow for public comment.
- Final versions of this Growth Plan Update will be posted and available for public comment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of Region 9 is the result of the commitment and work of Council members, the support of the CVPED and the Department of Housing and Community Development teams support teams, the enthusiasm displayed by applicants and stakeholders, and the endorsement of business, higher education, and local governments in the region. Thank you all!

GO Virginia Region 9 Council

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