



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION
REGIONAL COUNCIL 9

**REGIONAL COUNCIL 9
GROW EXISTING BUSINESS (GEB) TASK FORCE
MARCH 31, 2026**

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

IN-PERSON

1001 Research Park Blvd, Suite 301, Charlottesville, VA 22901

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81858287543>

Call 434-979-5610 x. 106 with connectivity issues.

AGENDA

1. **Welcome** (5 minutes) Ray Knott, GEB Chair
 - Roll Call
 - Public Comment

2. **ACTION ITEM:** Consent Agenda (3 minutes) Ray Knott
 - Meeting Minutes, January 6, 2026

3. **Update(s):** (10 minutes) Shannon Holland, Director
 - Region 9 GEB Projects Dashboard
 - Region 9 Project Pipeline
 - Innovation Corridor Roadmap Report

4. **ACTION ITEM:** Project Review (30 minutes) Ray Knott
 - Venture Central Food & Beverage Accelerator
 - Executive Summary
 - Scoring Rubric - Blank

5. **Other Business** (2 minutes) Ray Knott

6. **Adjourn** (1 minute) Ray Knott



**REGIONAL COUNCIL 9
GROW EXISTING BUSINESS (GEB) TASK FORCE
JANUARY 6, 2026
11 am to NOON
ALL-VIRTUAL**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86550899867>

Call 434-979-5610 x. 106 with connectivity issues.

MINUTES

Grow Existing Business Task Force Members Present: Ray Knott (Chair), Leslie Kidd, Paige Read, Jennifer Schmack, Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch

Grow Existing Business Task Force Members Absent: Gary Wood

Staff: Shannon Holland, Christie Taylor

Guests: Rebecca Haydock, Venture Central; Jack Honig, DHCD; Hope Lawrence, Venture Central

1. Call to Order.

Ray Knott called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

- **Welcome**

Ray Knott welcomed members to the first meeting of the Grow Existing Business Task Force this year. He gave a reminder that all task force members should be on camera and be ready to unmute their microphones to participate. Members of the public were asked to stay on mute unless giving public comment or if called upon for a comment.

- **Roll Call**

A roll call was performed. Quorum was established, as noted above.

- **Public Comment**

No public comments were received prior to or during the call for public comments.

2. ACTION ITEM(s): Consent Agenda

- **Joint Task Force Meeting Minutes, GEB & ESHIP, August 7, 2025**

Because the previous meeting was conducted jointly with the Entrepreneurship Task Force, it was noted that the motion should state that the GEB Task Force would be acting only in its capacity for acceptance. The Entrepreneurship Task Force will review when they next meet.

Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch made the motion to accept the minutes of the August 7, 2025 meeting as it pertains to the GEB Task Force. Leslie Kidd seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Update(s):

Shannon Holland introduced guests, Jack Honig with DHCD, and Hope Lawrence and Rebecca Haydock with Venture Central.

- **Growth & Diversification Plan Grant Opportunities – 2025**

Shannon Holland provided the update that the state Board approved the Growth Plan in early December. The council approved grant opportunities supporting the plan were included in the meeting packet.

- **Region 9 Growing Existing Businesses Projects Dashboard**

The GEB Dashboard for active projects is on page 7. There were no questions.

- **Region 9 Project Pipeline**

Shannon Holland explained that the project pipeline on page 8 has a new format. The intent is to clarify at the task force and council level “what is in the works.”

4. Project Deliverable Review

- MEMO: Food & Beverage Business Accelerator Report Review
- Discussion

Ray Knott highlighted the details shared in the memo on page 9, where the contract wording is provided. The following questions guided discussion.

- **Does the report meet the contract deliverables?**

Committee members verified the deliverables. Concerns were raised about limited geographical diversity on the advisory board. The Task Force found representation included 2 from Fauquier, 1 from Albemarle, 1 from Culpeper, and 3 with statewide or specialized roles.

- **What are strengths, or gaps? What is unclear?**

A concern was raised about the limited number of accelerator-ready businesses with revenues between \$100,000 and \$1 million. The project team clarified that a \$300,000 revenue threshold was the expectation when applying for this grant, however, through evaluation at \$100,000 target was determined. They plan to be flexible so a \$50,000 could qualify if they're strong candidates. Questions were also posed about corporate sponsorship. The applicants explained that VEDP is helping to connect them to potential sponsors to approach for partnership. Foundation support is also being pursued. When asked about protecting intellectual property and trade secrets for small businesses, the team noted that sensitive information will not be shared with corporate partners or investors. Investments do not grant access to private data; that only occurs during acquisition negotiations under confidentiality agreements and NDAs.

- **What issues should be addressed in a potential implementation proposal?**

Board composition was reiterated. The project team should also consider adding efforts in peer networking for the implementation grant.

Paige Read made the motion to consider this report as having met the project deliverables. Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch seconded the motion. The motion carried.

5. Other Business

No other business was presented.

6. Adjourn

Leslie Kidd made the motion to adjourn. Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 AM.

Project Milestone Dashboard – Region 9 GROW EXISTING BUSINESS

As of 2026Q4; Completed 3/25/2026

Project	Funding	Industry	Projected Businesses Served	Actual Businesses Served	Projected Jobs	Actual Jobs	Active/ Closed	Status Prev QR	Status Most Recent QR	Contract dates	Notes
Wine Industry Implementation - Nelson County	\$ 224,125	Food & Beverage Manufacturing	104	64	20	2	Active	Green	Green	3/11/2025-3/11/2027	
Project VITAL - CvilleBioHub	\$ 4,302,887	Biosciences	60	40	68	3	Active	Green	Green	10/1/2024-10/1/2027	Reported annually, so this may stay flat until 2026Q2
Food & Beverage Business Accelerator - Venture Central	\$ 100,000	Food & Beverage Manufacturing	0		0		Closed	Green	Green	2/1/2025-2/1/2026	Implementation proposal received. Performance and fiscal closeouts with project team. All funds used.
Innovation Corridor Road Map - CVPED	\$ 100,000	Biosciences, IT & Comm, Light Manufacturing	0		0		Active	Green	Green	7/1/2025-6/30/2026	Early presentation and draft findings offered by project team.
	\$ 4,727,012		164	104	88	5					



Project Pipeline

March 25, 2026

Project				Region 9 Deadlines*				
Project – Working Title	Grant Type	Strategy	Projected Funding Source	2026				
				3/18	5/13	7/15	9/23	12/10
Food & Beverage Business Accelerator	Implementation	GEB	Single Region Statewide Competitive	Proposal Recv'd				
Bio Bridge (TPI)	Implementation	TD	Single Region Statewide Competitive		x	x		
Innovation Corridor Road Map	Implementation	GEB	FY 2027 Per Capita			x	x	
Mobile AI Unit (resubmission from Board deferral)	Implementation	TD	Statewide Competitive (led by Region 6)	Board Approved 3.24.2026				

*Application target dates are staff projections and may not reflect applicant commitments.

Innovation Corridor Strategic Roadmap Update

March 25, 2026

The Steering Committee has met 10 times, three times in the past quarter and most recently on March 17, 2026. About 60 one-to-one interviews with regional research and industry leaders have been completed. Refined high-growth opportunities were identified and situational assessments completed. These results along with strategic implications and development pathways were shared and discussed at the Advisory Group meeting on February 12, 2026. The next step is for TEconomy to draft the strategic roadmap with a draft expected by April 17. That draft will be shared with the Advisory Group. The report is expected by mid-May and will be shared with the Growing Existing Business Task Force for review prior to the GO Virginia Region 9 Annual Meeting on June 16. TEconomy plans to present the report at that June meeting.

Project Committed Milestones	YQ	Updates
Engage project consultant	2025Q3	Hired TEconomy.
Project kickoff meeting	2025Q3	Project began on July 1 and project kickoff meeting held on July 11.
Assessment of industry-facing core competencies begins	2025Q3	Completed
Assessment of regional clusters begins	2025Q3	Completed
Assessment of industry-facing core competencies completed	2025Q4	Completed
Assessment of regional clusters completed	2025Q4	Completed
Identification of high-growth opportunities begins	2025Q4	Completed
Situational assessment to inform strategic priorities begins	2025Q4	Completed
Advisory group meets	2025Q4	First Advisory Group meeting held on October 17, 2025.
Advisory group meets	2026Q1	Second Advisory Group meeting held on February 12, 2026.
Identification of high-growth opportunities completed	2026Q1	Completed
Situational assessment to inform strategic priorities completed	2026Q1	Completed
Initial draft of strategic plan presented to advisory group for input	2026Q1	Slight delay - expected by April 17, 2026.
Strategic plan finalized	2026Q2	Slight delay - Expected by May 15, 2026.
Plan presented to Regional council and other groups in region	2026Q2	Report to be presented at Region 9 Annual Meeting on June 16, 2026.
Grant wrap-up	2026Q2	Expected by June 30, 2026.



GO Virginia Region 9

Executive Project Summary

Project Name: Venture Central Food and Beverage Accelerator

Applicant: Venture Central

Contact Name: Rebecca Haydock

Grant Timeline: 2 years (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2028)

GO Virginia Amount Requested: \$262,192

Match Amount Proposed: \$131,308

Local Match Subtotal: \$120,000

Match Breakdown: In-kind \$11,000; Cash - \$120,308

Localities Served:

- City of Charlottesville and Albemarle, Fauquier, Madison, Nelson, and Orange Counties (via accelerator)
- Region 9 (via online resource hub)

Local Match Commitment From:

- City of Charlottesville and Albemarle, Fauquier, Madison, Nelson, and Orange Counties

Other Match Commitment From:

- In-kind + Cash: Venture Central

Letters of Support From:

Letters of support for this initiative were provided by a broad coalition of regional stakeholders, including **localities** Albemarle County, the City of Charlottesville, Fauquier County, Madison County, Nelson County, Orange County, the Town of Orange, and Greene County; **project partners** BEACON Kitchen, Carver Food Enterprise Center, GENEDGE, Central Virginia SBDC, Laurel Ridge SBDC, the Charlottesville Angel Network, Virginia Specialty Food Association,, and Community Investment Collaborative; **food businesses** Absurd Snacks, Myles Comfort Foods, Penny's Imperfect Pizza, Cake Bloom, RVP Bar, Noogs, Mabel's Bakeshop, La Vache Microcreamery, Good Phyte, Farmstead Ferments, and Olive Oil Flights; and **other entrepreneurial support/educational supporters** Shenandoah Community Capital Fund, Rivers Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Lighthouse Network, Hampton Roads SBDC, ICAP, Matthew Brown (The Wine Coalition), and Piedmont Virginia Community College.

Strategy: Grow Existing Business

Region 9 Target Sectors this project is focused on: Food & Beverage Manufacturing

Region 9 Growth Plan Opportunities Targeted:

- Support implementation grants from gaps identified in planning grants or other regional reports
- Support sector-led initiatives that address business-validated sector gaps to traded sector growth

Description:

The **VC Food & Beverage Accelerator** addresses a documented gap in Region 9's entrepreneurial support ecosystem: 92% of regional food and beverage manufacturers remain under \$1M in annual revenue, not for lack of viable products or customer demand, but due to structural barriers to growth. This implementation project will deliver two cohorts of industry-specific programming to 16-20 growth-stage manufacturers over 24 months, combining a structured curriculum framework, individualized coaching, expert consultation, direct industry



connections, and peer learning. An additional 40 businesses will be served through an online resource hub during the grant period. Planning research, including 80+ stakeholder interviews and a survey of 89 entrepreneurs, validated both the gap and the demand, with 84% of respondents expressing interest in accelerator participation. The project leverages existing regional assets, including commercial kitchens, local and state entrepreneur service organizations, and industry associations, and is designed as a model for potential expansion across Virginia. This project convenes existing assets, for the first time in Virginia, and offers new, qualified, and comprehensive support to catalyze long-term growth and transform the state of the industry for F&B manufacturing growth across Virginia.

Return on Investment: -55% at Year 3; 89% at Year 5 (from ROI Worksheet)

GO Virginia Core Metrics and Committed Outcomes:

- Number of jobs created: 10 during 2-year grant; 69 over 5 years
- Number of existing businesses expanded: 16 during 2-year grant; 40 over 5 years
- Number of businesses served: 36 during 2-year grant; 90 over 5 years
- Total funds raised by businesses served: \$150,000 during 2-year grant; \$1,000,000 over 5 years

List Other Outcomes or Deliverables, if any:

- Number of accelerator participants achieving 15%+ revenue growth: 10 during 2-year grant; 20 over 5 years
- Number of accelerator participants with production transitions: 8 during 2-year grant; 20 over 5 years
- Number of accelerator participants achieving capital readiness: 16 during 2-year grant; 40 over 5 years
- Number of accelerator participants with knowledge and capability gains: 16 during 2-year grant; 40 over 5 years
- Number of accelerator participants and/or resource hub users with partner and peer engagement: 30 during 2-year grant; 140 over 5 years
- Number of new mentors engaged: 10 during 2-year grant; 25 over 5 years

Highlight Major Grant Activities in Bullet format:

- Hire and onboard program staff; establish Advisory Board and finalize partner agreements.
- Recruit and select 8-10 growth-stage food and beverage manufacturers per cohort through a competitive application process (Cohort 1: October 2026; Cohort 2: September 2027).
- Deliver an 8-month curriculum framework covering financial management, production scaling, distribution strategy, marketing, regulatory compliance, and leadership development.
- Provide monthly workshops at rotating regional locations with virtual participation options.
- Facilitate monthly 1:1 coaching and expert consultations addressing individual business challenges.
- Recruit and manage an expert network of industry specialists.
- Collaborate with regional partners (BEACON Kitchen, Carver Food Enterprise Center, SBDC, VSFA) for facility access, counseling, and industry connections.
- Facilitate peer networking and alumni engagement to build a sustained regional F&B entrepreneur network.
- Create a program sustainability plan.
- Evaluate program outcomes and publish a final two-year impact report.

Single Region Statewide Competitive Grant Proposal

SCORING RUBRIC

This scoring rubric is used to evaluate projects applying for this fund. Proposals must score 75 or greater to advance.

Instructions

1. Review the proposal keeping in mind the four scoring sections, including:
 - Economic Impact
 - Regional/Inter-regional Collaboration
 - Project Readiness
 - Sustainability
2. Score each section based on the proposal making notes in the section provided.
3. You may assign any whole number within the range shown for that criterion
4. Enter totals in the summary table below.
5. Bring to the GEB Task Force Meeting on March 31 to reference during discussion.
6. At the task force meeting, the reviewers will collectively determine the score range and will make a recommendation for the Council on whether to advance the proposal to the State Board.

Summary Scoring Table

Section	Your Score	Maximum Points
Economic Impact		/40
Collaboration		/20
Readiness		/20
Sustainability		/20
PROJECT TOTAL		/100

Economic Impact (40 points):

(1) Goals & Strategies (0-15 points)			
This criterion assesses the potential economic benefits of the proposed project and its alignment with regional priorities.			
<i>Project does not align with GO Virginia mission or regional priorities..</i>	<i>Project aligns with GO Virginia mission and regional priorities, but the scale of impact is limited (e.g., few new jobs created, modest wage gains, or benefits not clearly tied to traded-sector growth).</i>	<i>Project aligns with GO Virginia mission and regional priorities, with strong potential benefits but either job creation OR wage growth OR strengthening of traded-sector is not significant in the near term.</i>	<i>Project strongly aligns with GO Virginia’s mission and regional priorities and is expected to deliver transformative regional impact through a combination of high-wage job creation, economic diversification, and strengthening of traded-sector ecosystems</i>
0	5	10	15
(2) Metrics & Outcomes (0-15 points)			
Project application should include relevant data that illustrates the regional need, along with appropriate and comprehensive metrics to track both project outputs (activities) and outcomes (results). Metrics should be quantitative where possible, but may also include relevant qualitative measures. Applications should explain the sources and methodology used to develop metrics, show how the project will advance GO Virginia core performance outcomes, and include a plan for remedial action if outputs or outcomes are not achieved.			
<i>Metrics and outcomes are missing or not relevant to the project</i>	<i>Metrics and outcomes identified, but underdeveloped or not relevant. Outcomes may be unrealistic or unclear.</i>	<i>Metrics and outcomes are identified, but methodology or sourcing not clear, and outcomes may be overstated.</i>	<i>Application includes clear, realistic, and comprehensive metrics with identified sources and methodology, shows how the project will drive GO Virginia core outcomes, and outlines how results will be tracked and adjusted if needed.</i>
0	5	10	15

(3) Economic Impact Analysis (0-10 points)			
Applicants must provide an economic impact analysis that explains the expected benefits of the project relative to its costs. The analysis should describe the project's potential return, explain key assumptions and methodology, and demonstrate how the project delivers value to the region and Commonwealth.			
<i>No economic impact analysis provided, or analysis is not credible.</i>	<i>Analysis projects only a nominal or unclear benefit; assumptions are significantly inflated or unsupported.</i>	<i>Analysis shows potential benefits but relies on weak, unclear, or overstated assumptions.</i>	<i>Analysis clearly demonstrates credible benefits with well-supported assumptions and strong potential for additional economic impact.</i>
0	4	7	10

Economic Impact Subtotal	/40
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Regional & Interregional Collaboration (20 points):

(4) Regional Collaboration(0-10 points)			
Projects should demonstrate strong participation from multiple localities, businesses, higher education institutions, and other partners. Successful applications show meaningful, strategic collaboration, with local partners actively involved in project development and implementation, and clear evidence that the effort complements—not duplicates—existing programs.			
<i>Project is not an interregional collaboration and will not impact localities..</i>	<i>Project reaches a large population but has limited meaningful participation from local partners, or vice versa.</i>	<i>Project involves multiple localities with at least two actively participating localities and engagement from other stakeholders.</i>	<i>Project significantly impacts the majority of the population across the region and demonstrates meaningful collaboration among localities, businesses, higher education, and other key partners</i>
0	4	7	10
(5) Regional Priorities (0-5 points)			
Strategies should align with the Growth & Diversification Plan for each region, and the targeted growth industries outlined in those plans. Projects impacting more than one region in a manner consistent with each region’s Growth & Diversification Plan shall score higher. Where applicable, projects may also show alignment with other significant regional strategies (such as TPI or REI). Projects that impact more than one region in ways that are consistent with each region’s strategies will score higher.			
<i>Project does not align with the target industries and strategies in the G&D Plan(s).</i>	<i>Alignment with the G&D Plan(s) is vague or indirect, and prioritization not well developed.</i>	<i>Project generally aligns with target industries outlined by the region(s) in the G&D Plan(s), but not demonstrated clearly in the application.</i>	<i>Project clearly aligns with the target industries and diversification strategies outlined in the G&D Plan(s) for each participating region.</i>
0	1	3	5

(6) Partnerships & Coordination (0-20 points)

Projects should demonstrate the involvement of businesses, colleges and universities, and other public and private entities within the region in the conceptualization and implementation of the project. Projects demonstrating cost efficiencies, repurposing of existing funds, and leveraging of existing assets shall be given special consideration in scoring. Project should not be duplicative of existing efforts, programs, or funding streams.

<i>Few or no partners identified; little evidence of coordination.</i>	<i>Partners are named but roles are vague or limited; coordination mechanisms are unclear.</i>	<i>Several partners engaged with defined roles; some coordination structure in place; partial evidence of leveraging assets or avoiding duplication.</i>	<i>Strong set of partners with active roles; clear coordination mechanisms; effective use of existing assets; and evidence that the project is complementary, not duplicative.</i>
0	1	3	5

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Regional/Inter-Regional Collaboration Subtotal	/20
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Project Readiness (20 points)

(7) Timeline & Milestones (0 – 10 points)			
Applicants should have the capacity and experience to implement the proposed scope of work, and this should be demonstrated through a track-record of experience and work completed to date. Applicants should be able to execute a contract within 6 months and complete the scope of work within the contract grant period. Projects should reflect a realistic timeline for project milestones, with drawdowns planned accordingly and on a reimbursement basis. Regional Councils shall coordinate with local governments and subject matter experts in the review of the applications to ensure project readiness and support, and to identify potential barriers to implementation which should be acknowledged in the application			
<i>Timeline exceeds the 24-month max or no milestones established.</i>	<i>Timeline is unrealistic. Milestones identified, but underdeveloped or not relevant.</i>	<i>Timeline and/or milestones may be optimistic, but applicant able to address potential delays or barriers.</i>	<i>Timeline is realistic with appropriate milestones identified with drawdown schedule planned accordingly.</i>
0	4	7	10
(8) Budget & Match (0 – 10 points)			
Applications shall present a comprehensive budget with adequate matching resources, and sufficient cash to address changes to the project costs or scope. Match shall include only what is reasonable and necessary for the project at hand. Match shall not include state resources. All funds shall be documented through letters of commitment, in-kind forms, or other relevant documentation outlining the availability of the necessary matching funds.			
<i>Project has inadequate resources to cover the scope of work. Matching resources are not relevant or necessary for the project.</i>	<i>Resources may cover the scope of work, but match relies heavily on in-kind contributions with little available cash to address unexpected costs.</i>	<i>Application includes a comprehensive budget with relevant and sufficient matching cash and in-kind resources to cover the scope of work and changes.</i>	<i>Application includes a comprehensive budget with relevant and well-documented match. Project demonstrates strong financial capacity with more than sufficient cash resources committed.</i>
0	4	7	10

Project Readiness Subtotal	/20
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Project Sustainability (20 points): Questions 17, 18-19

(9) Financial Sustainability (0 – 10 points)			
Projects shall demonstrate a plan for financial sustainability after grant funds are exhausted. Projects should not include one-time programs or events. Commitments for long-term implementation or financial support should be documented through letters of commitment. Financial sustainability may refer to funding for future phases of work as it applies to joint site and infrastructure development, or future operations as it applies to construction-related projects.			
<i>Project is a one- time program or event that is not sustainable beyond the GOVA funding.</i>	<i>Plans for financial sustainability are vague or underdeveloped, and firm commitments are not in place.</i>	<i>Plans for financial sustainability are presented, with some firm commitments in place.</i>	<i>Plans for financial sustainability are thorough, with a realistic revenue model or strong financial commitments beyond GO Virginia funding.</i>
0	4	7	10
(10) Demand (0-10 points)			
Projects shall demonstrate a pipeline of demand from private industry partners and/or end users (workers). Demand should be demonstrated through letters of support and commitment for private industry partners. Projects that are scalable and replicable across regions shall score higher.			
<i>Project is a one-time program or event without ongoing demand.</i>	<i>Application indicates a pipeline of demand, but not thoroughly documented.</i>	<i>Application demonstrates strong demand through commitments from multiple private industry partners and/or a proven track record, with potential for scalability and replication across regions.</i>	
0	5	10	

Financial Sustainability Subtotal	/20
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