GO VIRGINIA REGION 6

FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

GO VIRGINIA REGION 6

Mary Ball Washington Regional Council
GO Virginia Region 6 FY 24 Annual Report

I: INTRODUCTION

Region six includes the counties of Caroline, Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Westmoreland; the towns of Bowling Green, Colonial Beach, Irvington, Kilmarnock, Montross, Port Royal, Tappahannock, Urbanna, Warsaw, West Point, and White Stone; and the city of Fredericksburg. The region is made up of three planning districts: The George Washington Regional Commission, the Northern Neck Planning District Commission, and the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission. The make-up of region six is diverse and includes urban areas along the I-95 corridor leading to Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., military bases that provide a large source of employment, and rural counties with limited funds and resources for economic development.

The Region Six Council, also known as the Mary Ball Washington Regional Council, is led by John Anzivino as chair, and is supported by the George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC), led by Executive Director Chip Boyles, Deputy Director Kate Gibson, Program Director Ian Ginger, and Program Coordinator Sarah Oldaker. Region Six updated its Growth and Diversification Plan in 2023 and its focus remains on six targeted industry sectors.

The Region 6 FY24 Annual Report will highlight the work done by staff and the Regional Council. FY24 included a focus on outreach to localities, partners, and stakeholders, growing collaboration and connections between the three subregions, approving and starting the Regional Entrepreneurial Initiative, and completing the Talent Pipeline Initiative.

FY 24 Target Sectors:

Aquacultures/Seafood/Commercial Fishing/Marine Industries

Forestry/Wood Products/Paper

Manufacturing

Distribution/Logistics

Information/Data Centers

Professions, Scientific and Technical Services

II: GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION PLAN

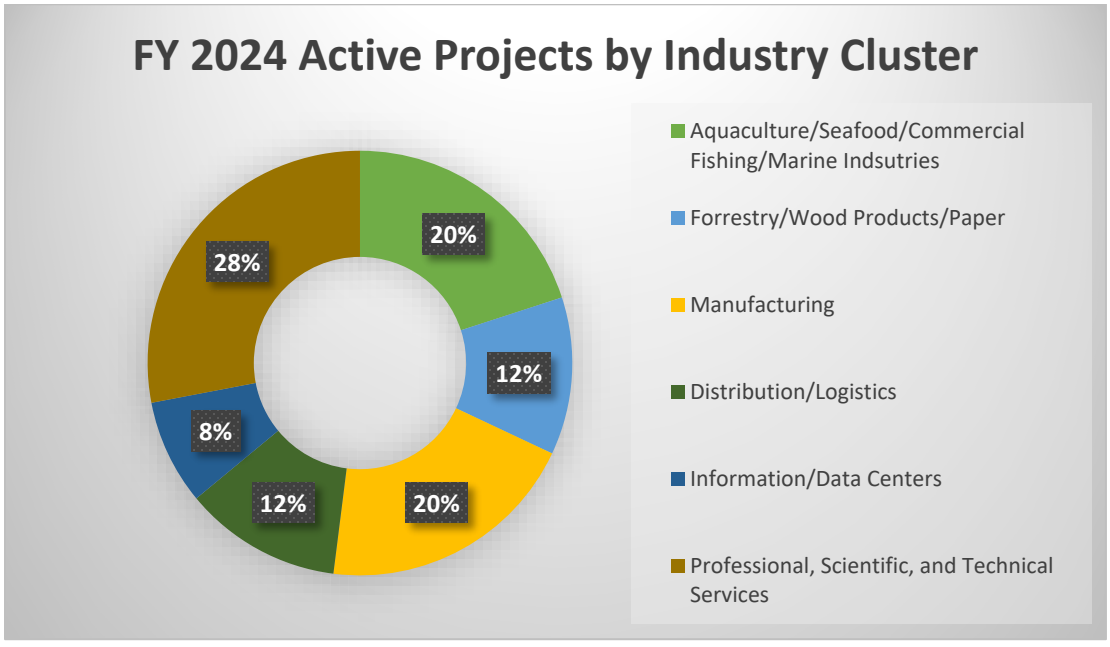
The Region 6 Council approved an update to the Growth and Diversification Plan in 2023. The update reviewed the six Targeted Industry Clusters and evaluated data showing growth and projections in those clusters. The Council held a retreat in July of 2023, lead by a consultant, which focused on the future goals of GO Virginia Region 6. This retreat and its findings helped inform the 2023 G&D update. The completion of the Talent Pathways Initiative by the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board was also crucial in developing the 2023 update.

While Region 6's main focus has historically been workforce development, we've continued to broaden our emphasis on other investment areas such as entrepreneurship. This is evident in the approval of our Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative. Through this project, a new entity, the *Rivers Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Council* was established to lead entrepreneurial efforts across the entirety of Region 6.

In addition to the REI, the Council approved the *Expanding Smart Community Tech* project lead by Stafford EDA and RIoT. The overarching goal of the project was to extend the work of the Smart Community Testbed to rural communities in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. Both projects advance the goal of the Council to develop a build a strong foundation for the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

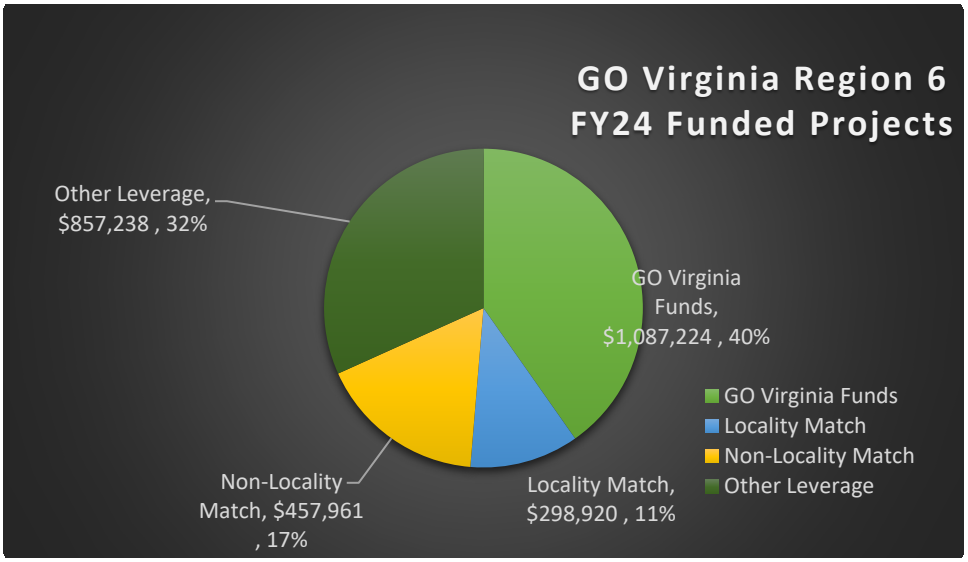
In addition, the approval of the *Promoting Careers in Aquaculture 2.0* project supports the Region 6 Council's goal of aligning Region 6 talent with current and prospective job opportunities and adapting education and training programs to meet company needs. This project builds upon a successful pilot and boasts strong private sector participation from oyster farms across the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula.

While Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services still remains the priority industry cluster with the most projects in Region 6, 40% of projects active in FY24 are in the Aquaculture/Seafood/Commercial Fishing/Marine Industries and Manufacturing industry clusters. Below is a graphic demonstrating the percentage of projects that are in each FY24 Industry Cluster.



III: SUMMARY OF PROJECTS IN FY24

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
Stafford County Economic Development Authority Expanding Smart Community Tech Entrepreneurship	$96,250	$51,350	$15,000	$20,000
Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem REI	$300,000	$60,000	$90,000	
Empowering Black Entrepreneurs Pilot Accelerator	$98,438		$99,738	$57,000
RCC New Career Technical Center	$290,000	$145,000	$145,000	$757,964
VTCECE Promoting Careers in Aquaculture 2.0	302,536	$42,580	$135,223	$22,274
TOTAL FY24 PROJECT FUNDS:	$1,087,224	$298,930	$484,961	$857,238



EXPANDING SMART COMMUNITY TECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP | STAFFORD COUNTY EDA

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$96,250	$51,350	$15,000	$20,000

The Stafford County Economic Development Authority will conduct a feasibility study to identify opportunities to expand the existing Smart Technology Entrepreneurial testbed into rural localities across GO Virginia Region 6. This project will explore potential environmental management, water, stormwater, public safety, traffic and other community issues that could be solved using smart technologies. In addition, it will explore strategies to apply smart technology solutions to existing businesses and develop and/or attract smart technology businesses to the region. *Product: Region 6 Smart Tech Strategic Plan – to identify areas of interest to engage with entrepreneurs and provide marketing strategy for testbed for ED department across GO Virginia Region 6, particularly rural localities*

RIVERS REGION ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM (REI) | FREDERICKSBURG REGIONAL ALLIANCE

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem REI	$300,000	$60,000	$90,000	

The FRA was chosen by the Region 6 Council to carry out the REI with $300,000 of GO Virginia funding over two years. Forming the RREEC, which is a 501(c)3, and hiring the Executive Director were the first steps in carrying out the goals of the project which includes a REI Strategy and Report with an Actionable Strategies Plan. The RREEC will be the entrepreneurial ecosystem builder serving GO Virginia Region 6. Project goals include: identify and enable entrepreneurs across Region 6, develop internal network of founders and early-stage companies, enhance main street and high growth company creation, support the growth of veteran owned businesses and the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority, facilitate programming aimed at prospective and current entrepreneurs, and promote entrepreneurial success stories and their contribution to economic growth. *Products: REI Strategy and Report, and Actionable Strategies Plan.*

EMPOWERING BLACK ENTREPRENEURS PILOT ACCELERATOR | VIRGINIA BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
Empowering Black Entrepreneurs Pilot Accelerator	$98,438		$99,738	$57,000

The project will create an accelerator program to provide resources for Black-owned businesses to scale their operators through an accelerator program to include resources and mentorship and address the challenges businesses face due to limited access to capital, insufficient networking opportunities, and lack of business education through the following activities: 1) Develop and refine program curriculum, source mentors, and create resources for participants in accelerator program; 2) Workshop facilitation – industry experts will be hired as facilitators for workshops to share knowledge, skills, and insights; 3) Participant support including small business grants, services, and resources to ensure people from all backgrounds can participate. *25 Entrepreneurs Engaged, 5 New Business Created, 5 Businesses Served, 5 Mentors Engaged.*

RCC NEW CAREER TECHNCIAL CENTER | RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
RCC New Career Technical Center	$290,000	$145,000	$145,000	$757,964

RCC will renovate and repurpose an existing maintenance warehouse structure on the RCC Glenns Campus to improve classroom space and expand dual enrollment opportunities for RCC's high demand workforce training programs. The new Career Training Center will offer Diesel Mechanics, Welding, and HVAC programs. The Center will allow for day classes for dual enrolled students and evening classes for adult students. *94 Students Trained, 84 Credentials Awarded, 6 Businesses Served, 44 Students enrolled in dual enrollment programs.*

PROMOTING CAREERS IN AQUACULTURE 2.0 | VIRGINIA TECH CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
VTCECE Promoting Careers in Aquaculture 2.0	302,536	$42,580	$135,223	$22,274

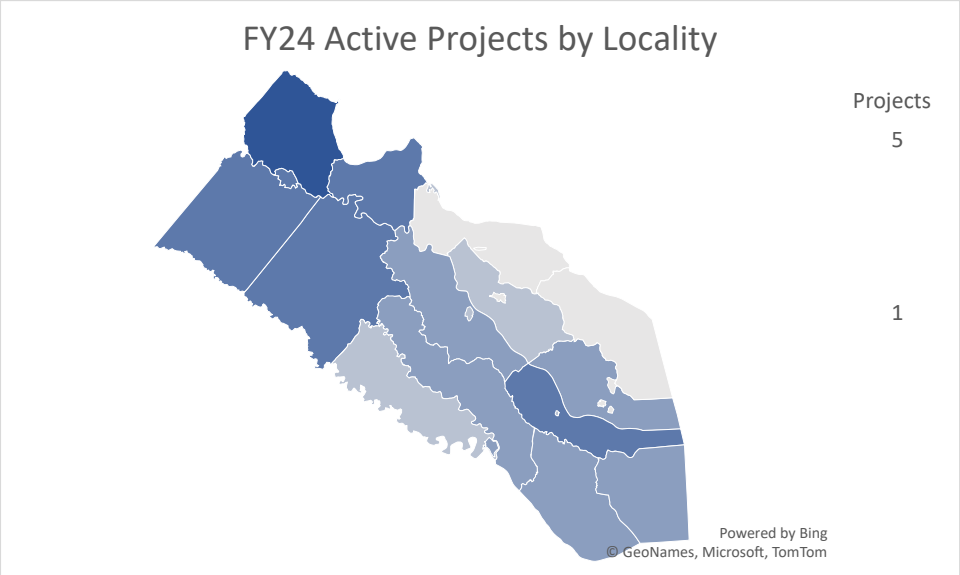
This project will continue to promote jobs in the aquaculture industry cluster by expanding high school students' understanding of what jobs are available in the aquaculture industry cluster, expanding educational opportunities that meet employers' needs, and supporting internship opportunities that help young people gain experience and awareness. Through partnerships with the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School, Aquaculture industry partners, and Community College System, the project will provide online learning modules, a week of hands-on learning, and a paid internship to complete the program. Teachers in participating localities will also be able to participate in a

"teach the teacher" program to expand the program throughout school divisions. *116 Participants Trained, 24 Businesses Served, 58 Internships Created, 74 Credentials awarded.*

IV: REGIONAL COLLABORATION & PARTNER SUPPORT

In FY24 the Region 6 Council and staff continued to promote full regional collaboration between the three sub regions: the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and the Fredericksburg region. An application information session was held for all K-12 Divisions in the Region to come together and discuss project collaboration. This meeting resulted in school divisions from our eastern most localities participating in the *Pathways to Success* and Stafford *Innovation* Pathways projects, both lead by Stafford County Public Schools.

Staff also traveled throughout Region 6 presenting to regional groups, specifically in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. These continued efforts to provide project equity to smaller localities have resulted in an increase in projects led by rural localities from FY23 to FY24.



The Stafford County Economic Development Authority's *Expanding Smart Community Tech Across Region 6* project, in partnership with the Town of Colonial Beach and Middlesex County, conducted listening and information sessions with rural localities to identify opportunities to bring smarty community solutions typically relegated to denser urban areas to rural localities across GO Virginia Region 6. This project demonstrates partnership from our Northern and largest locality with smaller localities in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula.

The Region 6 Council approved *the Regional Entrepreneurial Initiative* project with the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance which has formed a separate non-profit organization: *Rivers Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Council (RREEC)*. The RREEC will be the entrepreneurial ecosystem builder serving the entire GO Virginia Region 6. The Executive Director of RREEC, Mike Purello, is meeting with partners and stakeholders in every Region 6 locality to draft a REI Strategy and Report and Actionable Strategies Plan.

REGIONAL PARTNERS

- Virginia Sea Grant
- Rise Resilience Innovations
- Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority
- Old Dominion University
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- Rappahannock Community College
- Virginia Tech Center for Economic Development and Community Engagement
- KCB Oyster Holdings
- Little Wicomico Oyster Company, LLC
- Matheson Oyster Company
- Rappahannock Oyster Company
- Shores and Ruark Oyster Company
- Ward Oyster Company
- Oyster Seed Holdings
- Fredericksburg Area Chamber of Commerce
- University of Mary Washington
- Germanna Community College
- Stafford County EDA
- King George County EDA
- Lancaster County EDA
- Fredericksburg Regional Alliance
- RIoT
- GCubed, Inc.
- G3 Community Services
- Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
- Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
- Northern Neck Planning District Commission
- George Washington Regional Commission
- Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren
- JASON Learning
- Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Region 6 closed out two entrepreneurial ecosystem projects stemming out of the Fredericksburg Region in partnership with RIoT and the Virginia Smart Community Testbed. The Testbed has been crucial in promoting tech entrepreneurship in the region, as well as attracting tech start-ups, such as the Canadian company Cocoflo, to open offices in Stafford, VA.

Virginia Sea Grant's *Launching a Coastal Resilience Economy* project continued to support the growth of several industry clusters in building an economy around resiliency and water management in Hampton Roads and the Middle Peninsula. Taking advantage of the collaboration between companies in the cluster, the project has now moved into the product development stage. Companies are working with university partners to commercialize R&D efforts that have taken place over the past few years. The project team also started to look forward to post-project activities such as development of a site to attract resiliency companies to the area, and an R&D Incubator to attract entrepreneurs and promote education. By June 30th, 2024, the project has created 109 jobs, retained 53

jobs, expanded 4 businesses, and served 224 businesses through the CoVA A&R Consortium out of Old Dominion University.

The Fredericksburg region Chamber of Commerce's Workforce NOW Implementation project held its third annual Intern Expo in February 2024. The first expo was held as part of the planning grant that led to an implementation project. There have also been 6 workshops and a mock interview day for high school and post-secondary students held in FY24. By June 30th, 2024, there have been 356 businesses served and 176 paid internships created/filled.

FY24 also saw the completion of Region 6's *Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI*) led the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board. The TPI was completed in December of 2023 and presented to the Region 6 Council at their January 2024 meeting. The BCWDB was awarded $250,000 to conduct the TPI focusing on three of the Region's targeted industry clusters:

1. Aquaculture in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula subregions
2. Information technology in the greater Fredericksburg subregion
3. Manufacturing throughout the Region 6 area

Region 6 hopes to build upon the study with a potential implementation project designed to address some of the strategic recommendations identified in the TPI report.

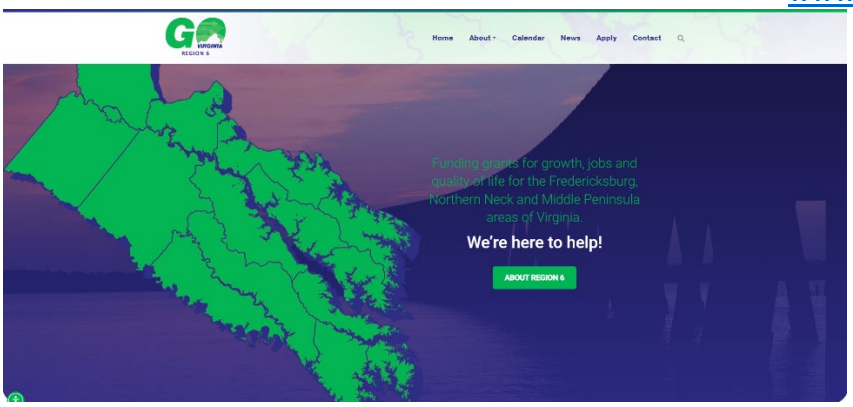
Staff closed out Projects closed out 6 in FY 24 which produced the following metrics:

Metric	Outcomes
Number of Jobs Created/Filled	113
Businesses Served	241
Number of New Products Completed/Released Into Production	22
Number of New Businesses Created	13
Number of Entrepreneurs Engaged	42
Number of Mentors Engaged	168
Total Capital Raised	70000
Students/Teachers Trained	1106
Credentials Awarded	235
Internships Created/Filled	13
New Programs/Credentials Implemented	2

VI: COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

Region 6 Council and Staff were able to accomplish all three communication and outreach goals set in FY23.

Staff for Region 6 issued an RFP to redesign the GO Virginia Region 6 website. Through a competitive procurement process, Consociate Media out of Gloucester, VA was chosen and began work updating and making the website more user friendly. The goal of the website update was to clearly educate stakeholders on the GO Virginia program, region specific goals, regional news, and celebrate current and past projects. The website was completed in June of 2024 and launched July 3rd, 2024.



Beginning in August of 2023, Region 6 staff began conducting GO Virginia application information sessions every three months in different locations across the region, including the three Planning District Commission offices. Attendees learned about the GO Virginia program, what funding was available, and how the application process works. Through these meetings, new partners were able to meet and collaborate on potential projects.

The First Annual GO Virginia Region 6 Economic Development Summit was held on January 22nd and 23rd, 2024. The Summit started with a regular Council meeting followed by a tour of NSWC Dahlgren for Councilmembers. A welcome reception was held that evening at the CoBE co-working space in Colonial Beach, VA. On Tuesday the 23rd, the program started off with a Welcome address from Congressman Rob Wittman and was followed by panels on the GO Virginia investment areas: Site Development, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development. There was also a panel highlighting the work of the *Launching a Coastal Resiliency Economy* project. The lunch keynote was delivered by President and CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Jason El Koubi. The summit was attended by over 100 people and held at the University of Mary Washington Dahlgren campus in King George, VA. The Council has planned to hold a 2nd summit in April 2025 at the Jepson Center in Fredericksburg.

Region 6 staff also continued to reach stakeholders and partners with regional news and updates through social media channels and a monthly newsletter, highlighting projects and opportunities for collaboration.

VII: PROJECT PIPELINE

REGIONAL TALENT STRATEGY | BAY CONSORTIUM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board (BCWDB), the lead applicant, is submitting an application to GOVA Region 6 for a Regional Talent Strategy (RTS) implementation project. The BCWDB is requesting a total of $286,718 over a two-year period. These funds will be used to implement a sector-focused RTS in GOVA Region 6. The goals of the RTS will be to enhance career awareness and career pathways, talent development, talent attraction and retention, and business toolkits. The RTS will focus on the Technology, Aquaculture, and Manufacturing Industry clusters. While the BCWDB is the lead on this strategy, the project will engage a variety of partners in workforce development, economic development, business and industry, education, local chambers of commerce, planning district commissions, education, and other stakeholders in Region 6.

FESTIVAL HALLE COMMERCIAL KITCHEN AND AQUACULTURE INCUBATOR | GREATER REEDVILLE ASSOCIATION

The Greater Reedville Association is applying for $280,800 in GO Virginia funds with $182,471.52 in matching funds for the Festival Halle Commercial Kitchen and Aquaculture Incubator program. A key feature of the Halle's restoration is the modernization of the kitchen to create a Teaching Commercial Kitchen. This space will focus on the aquaculture cluster – specifically by developing an incubator environment that grows each waterman's business. These include entrepreneurial activities, cluster expansion by supporting product preparation and distribution, workforce development, and regional heritage. The kitchen will be available to watermen looking to scale up their business. The kitchen will support shellfish and food preparation, packaging, and freezing.

ECONOMIC BUSINESSES EMPOWERMENT (EBE) BUSINESS ACCELERATOR | VIRGINIA BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Following a successful planning grant and pilot program, the Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce is requesting $274,735 in GO Virginia funds with a match of $170,770 for their Economic Businesses Empowerment Accelerator. This business accelerator initiative is designed to equip entrepreneurs with the vital skills and knowledge needed to launch or scale their businesses successfully. This comprehensive 8-10 week course offers a transformative learning experience, combining hands-on modules, expert-led sessions, and a robust network of support to ensure participants are well-prepared for sustainable growth and success. The program will cover 6 cohorts of businesses over two years. Upon graduation, participants will receive a Strategic Growth Business Plan and a Certificate of Completion, signifying their readiness to secure capital and expand their businesses sustainably. This program, designed by the Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce, provides a solid educational foundation, enabling entrepreneurs to navigate the business landscape confidently, secure necessary funding, and drive their ventures toward long-term success.

HEALTHY HARVEST FRESH AQUAPONICS FARM TO SCHOOL | HEALTHY HARVEST FOOD BANK

Healthy Harvest Food Bank is requesting $100,000 with a match of $50,000 and additional leverage of $20,000 for their Healthy Harvest Fresh (HFF) Aquaponics Farm to School pilot program. As a part of the Farm to School initiative, Healthy Harvest Fresh will engage with students at the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School for Marine Environmental Science, Northern Neck Technical Center Governor's STEM Academy for Agriculture and Maritime Studies, Rappahannock High School FFA Chapter as well as students from other local public and private school systems located across region within the Healthy Harvest service area. The collaboration will afford students opportunities to conduct applied research within this innovative and sustainable food production system and/or fulfill service hour requirements of that program by volunteering with HHF, either through the production or helping to develop and facilitate activities for younger students. HHF will partner with Career and Technical Student Organizations to serve as a work-based and/or service-learning site for students interested in pursuing careers in or related to indoor agriculture, food science, or health and nutrition. GoVa Grant Funds requested will be used to provide specialized equipment to accommodate the applied research to advance the study of aquaponics for students, provide opportunities for 6 students each year to conduct part-time work-based learning experiences within the field of aquaponics, to provide for training and credentialing for participants within the areas of aquaponics, food safety, greenhouse management, and others as program expands, and to provide support for current operations.

VIII: COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilmember Name	Organization
William Beale (Chair until 1/1/24)	CEO Blue Ridge Bank
Rob Quartel (Vice-Chair until 1/1/24)	NTELX
John Anzivino (Chair as of 1/1/24)	Springsted | Waters (Retired)
Jeff Szyperski (Vice-Chair as of 1/1/24)	Chesapeake Bank
Dr. Derek Aday	Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Taryn Brice-Rowland	Rogue Oyster Company, Lancaster EDA
Rene Daniels	Private Citizen (K-12 Experience)
Bruce Davis	Beltone Hearing Centers (retired), Germanna Community College
Jackie Davis	Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
Jan Erkert	Spangler Erkert and Associates
Val Foulds	Bank of America (Retired), Town of Colonial Beach (Retired)
Joel Griffin	Riphean Investments
Lisa Hull	Northern neck Tourism Commission

Dr. Shannon Kennedy	Rappahannock Community College
Kim McClellan	Fredericksburg Area Association of Realtors
Lindsey Watson	Rappahannock Electric Coop
Linda Worrell	Worrell Management Group
Kimberly Young	University of Mary Washington

IX: SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

Support Organization for Region 6 is:

The George Washington Regional Commission

406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

(540) 373-2890

Executive Director: Chip Boyles, boyles@gwregion.org

Deputy Director: Kate Gibson, gibson@gwregion.org

GO Virginia Program Director: Ian Ginger, ginger@gwreion.org

GO Virginia Program Coordinator: Sarah Oldaker, oldaker@gwregion.org

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS/LOGOS