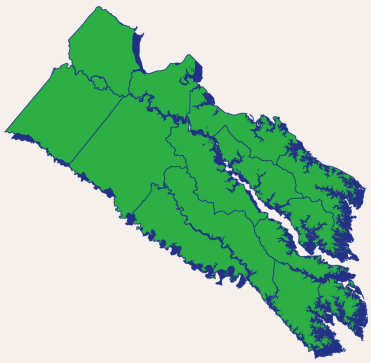
GO VIRGINIA REGION 6



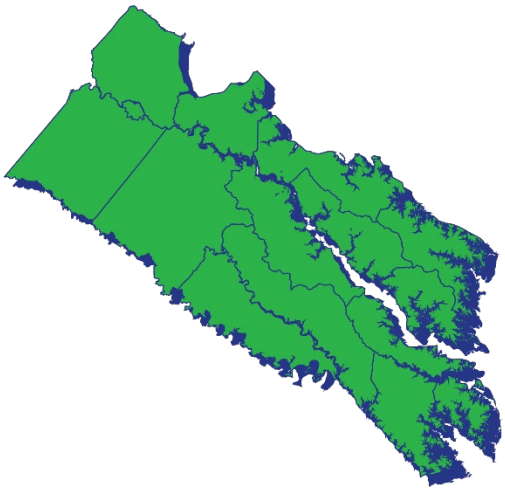
FY 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

GO VIRGINIA REGION 6

Mary Ball Washington Regional Council
GO Virginia Region 6 FY25 Annual Report

I: INTRODUCTION

GO Virginia Region 6 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 makeup of Region 6 is diverse and includes urban areas along the I-95 corridor leading to Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., three military bases including NSWC Dahlgren, Quantico, and Fort A.P. Hill that provide a large source of employment, and rural counties with limited funds and resources for economic development.



The Region 6 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, and Program Director Sarah Oldaker. Region 6 updated its Growth and Diversification Plan in 2023, adding Agriculture/Controlled Environment Agriculture as a seventh targeted industry cluster.

The Region 6 FY25 Annual Report will highlight the work done by staff and the Regional Council. FY25 focused on increasing the future project pipeline, diversifying representation among the industry clusters on the Regional Council, collaboration amongst rural and more urban localities, and beginning the 2025 Growth and Diversification Plan Update.

FY 25 Target Sectors:

Aquaculture / Seafood / Commercial Fishing / Marine Industries
Forestry / Wood Products / Paper
Manufacturing
Distribution / Logistics
Information / Data Centers
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
Agriculture/Controlled Environment Agriculture

II: GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION PLAN

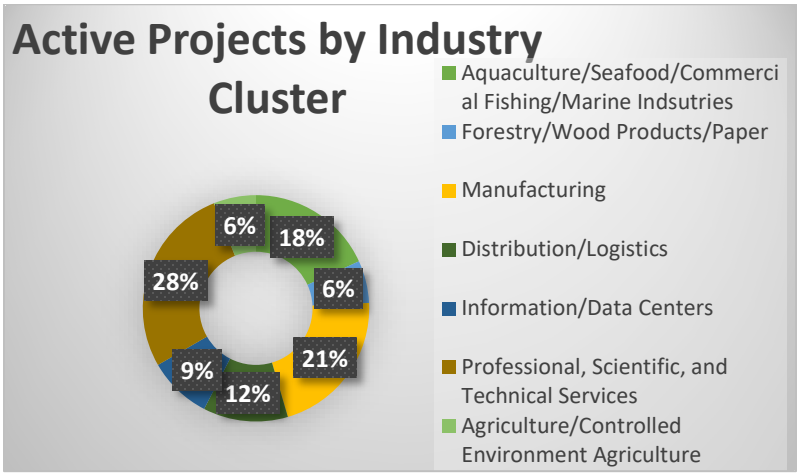
The Region 6 Council approved an update to the Growth and Diversification Plan in 2023. The update reviewed the six Targeted Industry Clusters and evaluated data showing growth and projections in those clusters. The Council made the decision to add Agriculture and Controlled Environment Agriculture as the seventh targeted industry cluster for the region. This decision was made given the industry's historical significance in the region, but also to allow for a focus on future innovation opportunities with controlled environmental agriculture. While the Council has historically mainly focused on Workforce Development as the primary investment area, FY25 provided a shift in focus to Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building as laid out in the 2023 G&D Plan Update.

The Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Council began working on the Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative, focusing on developing an ecosystem around the Professional/Technical/Scientific Services and IT industry clusters. Project leads and staff engaged with the Potomac Tech Bridge at UMW Dahlgren to explore how to leverage the commercialization of patents held at NSWC Dahlgren as well as expanding the capacity of the Smart Community Testbed. To prioritize entrepreneurship in these industry clusters, the Council approved the *Economic Impact Analysis for RIVERE Ecological Center and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem* planning project to look at the development of an entrepreneurial innovation center around water technologies.

The Aquaculture/Seafood/Commercial Fishing/Marine Industries cluster has been a historical and important cluster unique to the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. In FY25 the Council approved the *Virginia Tidewater Aquaculture & Maritime Innovation Incubator Program* to assist businesses with incubator programming and a commercial kitchen space allowing for business expansion. The program aligns with the 2023 G&D Plan Strategy to "Establish/build upon career pathways that reflect company needs" by providing classes and ServSafe certifications to owners and employees of the companies as well as training space in the kitchen. The programming was based on interviews and insight from watermen as well as previous GO Virginia Region 6 funded feasibility study around commercial kitchens.

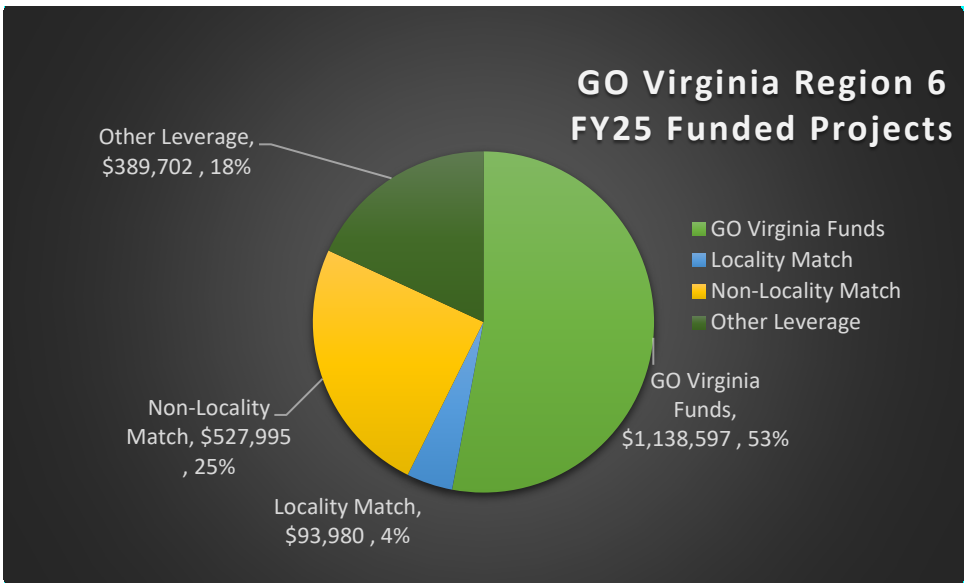
Additionally, the Region 6 Council approved the *Cyber Titans Virginia Internship Program (VIP)* pilot program which, by working closely with businesses and employers, provided an internship and credentialing opportunity to high school Juniors and Seniors. Establishing internships and work-based learning programs is a key strategy for Region 6's workforce development goals.

While Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services still remains the priority industry cluster with the most projects in Region 6, 39% of projects active in FY25 are in the Aquaculture/Seafood/Commercial Fishing/Marine Industries and Manufacturing industry clusters.



III: SUMMARY OF PROJECTS IN FY25

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
CAREER ADVANCEMENT RESOURCE EDUCATION (CARE) PROJECT	$307,857	$22,160	$117,730.73	$0
ECONOMIC BUSINESS EMPOWERMENT (EBE) ACCELERATOR	$300,000	$45,000	$110,000	$80,715
CYBER TITANS VIRGINIA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (VIP)	$99,826.40	$0	$50,635.92	$146,602.92
ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR RIVERE ECOLOGICAL CENTER AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM	$72,100	$1,160	$34,890	$26,995
VIRGINIA TIDEWATER AQUACULTURE & MARITIME INNOVATION INCUBATOR PROGRAM	$280,800	$25,660	$114,740	$103,185.52
UMW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM	$78,014	$0	$40,000	$32,204
TOTAL FY25 PROJECT FUNDS:	$1,138,597.40	$93,980.00	$467,996.65	$396,302.44



CAREER ADVANCEMENT RESOURCE EDUCATION (CARE) PROJECT | BAY CONSORTIUM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$307,857	$22,160	$117,730.73	$0

The Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board's Career Advancement Resource Education (CARE) project's goal is to build new capacity to enhance career awareness and define career pathways within the identified targeted industries. The project will focus on four strategic goals: 1) develop the capacity to serve as the Sector Partnership Regional convenor to develop the foundation for employer-led talent development strategies through employer engagement; 2) define career pathways of the targeted industries influenced by data from employers; 3) address workforce development issues as larger industry initiatives to foster collaboration through the Sector Partnership Toolkit and outreach materials; and 4) collect and utilize data to inform collective talent development priorities and ensure actionable strategies are implemented through business toolkits.

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

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$300,000	$45,000	$110,000	$80,715

The program will launch a ten-week program for six cohorts over two years, serving 120 businesses across Region 6. Each cohort will focus on specific industries or demographic groups that require tailored support, such as minority-owned businesses, tech startups, or companies in the manufacturing sector. This project is a continuation of a previously successful planning grant. Metrics to be achieved from the project include:

1. 120 Businesses Served
2. 60 Businesses Expanded
3. 10 new Businesses Created (exclusive of the 120 businesses served)
4. 40 Jobs Created (FTE jobs count as one job and part-time counts as ½ job)
5. 30 New Mentors Providing Business Assistance
6. $400,000 in total capital raised by businesses served

CYBER TITANS VIRGINIA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (VIP) | CYBER BYTES FOUNDATION

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$99,826.40	$0	$50,635.92	$146,602.92

This internship program will prepare high school and college students, transitioning service members, and individuals seeking careers in cybersecurity. Cyber Titans VIP will design a training curriculum and certification pathway through a planning and pilot effort focused on cybersecurity. The initiative will focus on a four-step process: 1. Establish Workforce Goals – Collaborate with industry partners and localities to define specific workforce needs and she the Cyber Titans VIP curriculum. 2. Develop Action Plan – Design a strategic training plan that addresses workforce gaps and aligns with cybersecurity industry demands. 3. Implement – Execute the internship program in partnership with stakeholders (e.g. Region 6 localities, Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership VTOP, industry) ensuring effective placement and training for up to 20 participants. 4. Communicate – Maintain ongoing communication with stakeholders, ensuring transparency and progress tracking the planning and pilot phase will be used to establish necessary partnerships, design the program framework, and create a curriculum tailored to the region's industry needs. Once the framework is complete, the program will be piloted with 10 participants in an eight-week internship program, providing hands-on experience in the cybersecurity field.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR RIVERE ECOLOGICAL CENTER AND ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM | RIVERE ECOLOGICAL CENTER

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$72,100	$1,160	$34,890	$26,995

The proposed analysis evaluates the economic impact of a 25,000-square-foot facility that supports entrepreneurship and small business growth. Designed as a coworking space, the center will feature specialized areas, advanced technological infrastructure, and equipment to facilitate research and development focusing on river systems. The RIVERE Ecological Center will stand out as an innovative initiative, leveraging increasing investments and advancements in addressing climate and environmental challenges. There will be two phases of this planning effort: 1) an economic impact analysis and qualitative impact to measure demand for the RIVERE Ecological Center in the next 10 to 20 years for companies to conduct research and share best practices; and 2) the development of the RIVERE Ecological Virtual Center Plan and Digital Platform. The virtual center plan will identify future investor partnerships and focus on outreach to potential occupants. The virtual center will be a tool for folks to understand how the ecological enter will look once physically built out, incorporating what research companies need in terms of physical space and equipment. Both plans will inform a multi-phase implementation, emerging first as a virtual space and then as a physical building. The virtual center and digital platform will include work by the project team and steering committee to generate a roadmap for outreach to the local community. The steering committee will consist of local economic developers from Stafford County, the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC), among others.

VIRGINIA TIDEWATER AQUACULTURE & MARITIME INNOVATION INCUBATOR PROGRAM| THE GREATER REEDVILLE ASSOCIATION

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$280,800	$25,660	$114,740	$103,185.52

The Greater Reedville Association (GRA) has embarked on a multi-part approach to renovate Festival Halle, a former school building and now a community center, located in Reedville, VA. The first element is converting a portion of the space into a commercial kitchen to help local watermen bring their products directly to the marketplace and expand into markets outside the region and state. The second element is implementing an incubator program to support small businesses through specialized resources, skill development, financial tools, and market expansion. The first phase of the incubator program will focus on the following training components:

1. Food safety
2. Marketing and branding
3. Human resources and human capital management
4. Small business operations, accounting, and financial management

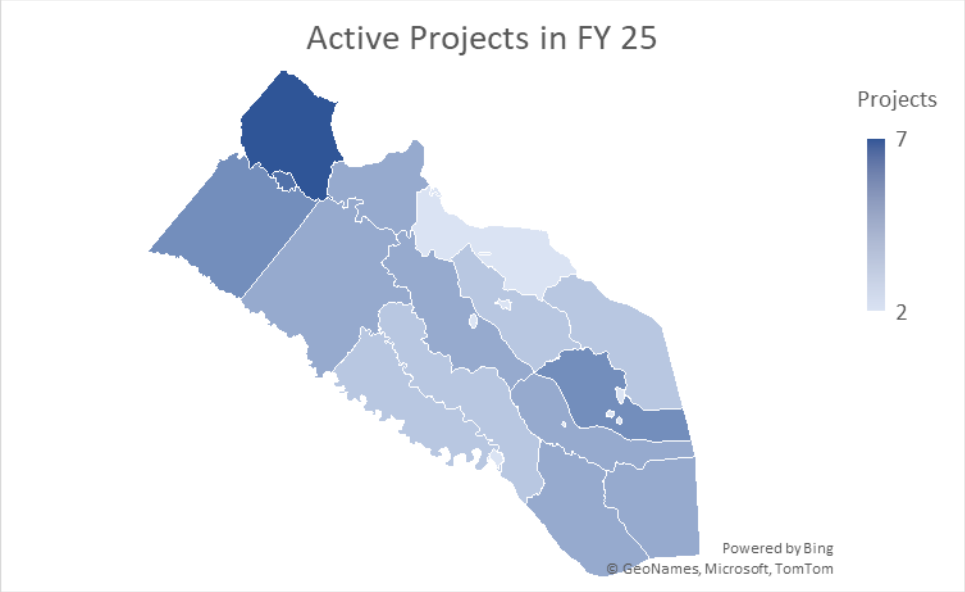
UMW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM | UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$78,014	$0	$40,000	$32,204

The Practice Management Certification Program will address the number of skilled workers to effectively run medical (primary care, etc.) offices. We will bring in a nationally recognized industry credentialing body, the Practice Management Institute (PMI), to certify the participants and further develop efficient and accurate practices. UMW will begin by offering the Certified Medical Office Manager Certificate Program. Participants in the program will complete a certification course and take the exam. This project will also research the impact of healthcare access on growth of the targeted industry clusters in the region before beginning the certification cohort.

IV: REGIONAL COLLABORATION & PARTNER SUPPORT

In FY25 the Region 6 Council and staff continued to promote full regional collaboration between the three subregions: the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and the Fredericksburg region. Staff held in-person Application Information Sessions every three months throughout FY25, rotating each session between the three subregions. These sessions led to increased participation, education, and partnerships among the rural and more urban areas of Region 6.



The approval of the *Virginia Tidewater Aquaculture & Maritime Innovation Incubator Program* was the first project approved focusing on entrepreneurship in the Aquaculture/Commercial Fishing industry clusters. This project was driven by industry need and support from both commercial fishermen and shellfish farmers who engaged heavily with GO Virginia Region 6 staff in FY25. This project spurred a new partnership with The Greater Reedville Association and the Lancaster EDA.

Region 6 Council was able to engage with new industry and workforce partners such as Cyber Bytes Foundation with the *Cyber Titans Virginia Internship Program (VIP)* who engaged with large employers such as SimVentions and school divisions in Planning District 16. With the approval of the Healthcare Policy by the GO Virginia State Board in FY25, Region 6 had its first healthcare focused project with the *UMW Practice Management Certificate* program partnering with Mary Washington Hospital.

Recent turnover on Council membership provided an opportunity to expand industry representation to members within the Targeted Industry Clusters and increase representation of the rural subregions.

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
- Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce
- Cyber Bytes Foundation
- Greater Reedville Association
- Northumberland County EDA
- Middlesex County EDA
- Mathews County EDA
- King and Queen County EDA
- Essex County EDA
- Gloucester County EDA
- Stafford County EDA
- City of Fredericksburg EDA
- Fredericksburg Regional Alliance
- Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Council

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Six projects were closed out during FY25 including one Implementation, one Statewide Competitive, three planning grants, and the Region 6 Talent Pathways Initiative.

Workforce NOW was an implementation grant that evolved from planning efforts in the previous *Fredericksburg Chamber Internship Expo* project. The project successfully implemented the Workforce NOW Internship Expo, in partnership with V-TOP, to pair high school and post-secondary students with employers. In total, the project served 412 businesses and placed 249 interns with businesses in the Region 6 Targeted Industry Clusters. The program will continue after the grant period has ended and has become self-sustaining through sponsorships.

Region 6 completed its first Site Development Planning grant with the *West Point Airport Industrial Site Evaluation* Project which funded the completion of the Due Diligence and Site Characterization Report, increasing 348 acres from a Tier 2 to a Tier 3 on the VBRSP Tier system.

The Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce completed planning efforts on the *Empower Black Entrepreneurs Accelerator Pilot Program*, successfully serving 20 businesses and engaging 20 entrepreneurs and 9 mentors. The pilot program served as the impetus for the *Economic Business Empowerment (EBE) Accelerator* Implementation grant which was approved in FY25 and has so far served 26 businesses, expanded 3 businesses, and created 2 full-time jobs and 7 part-time positions.

The *Launching the Coastal Resilience and Adaptation Economy* statewide competitive project, in partnership with GO Virginia Region 5, made significant impacts in creating a coastal resilience economy in the Middle Peninsula and Hampton Roads Regions. Final metrics from the full grant period included 110 jobs created, 4 businesses expanded, and 224 businesses served through the business accelerator with RISE Resilience Innovations and the Coastal Virginia Adaptation & Resilience Consortium through ODU. Outside of GO Virginia metrics, the program also attracted and retained 37 companies in Region 5 and 6 as well as retained 53 jobs.

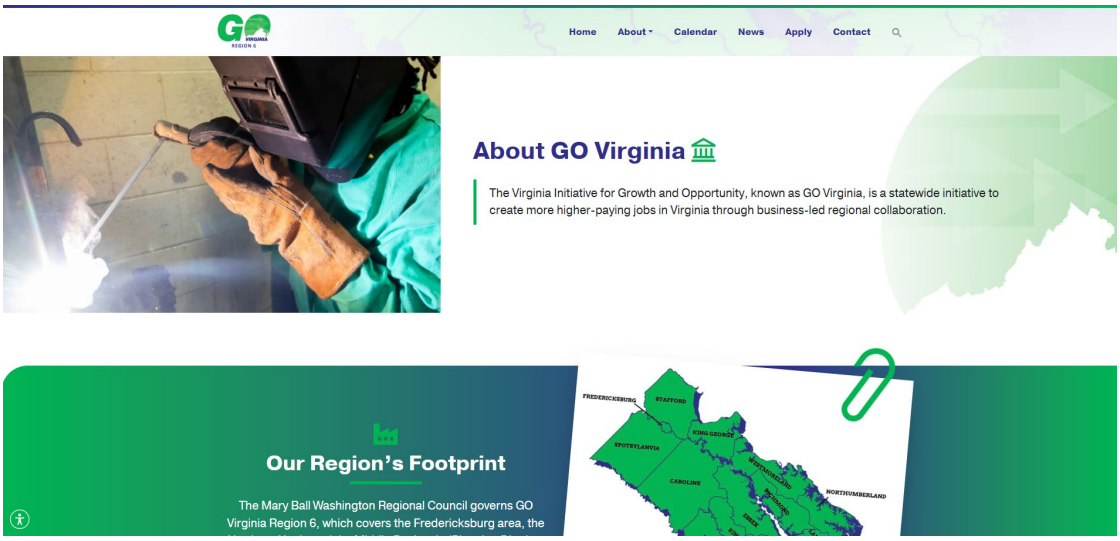
The Stafford County Public School's *Innovation Pathways* Project, which will close out in FY26, saw significant increases in participation from students and teachers in the region who sought to gain CompTIA certifications and training in Cybersecurity. To date, the project has trained 831 teachers and students and awarded 104 credentials.

Projects metrics obtained in FY25 included:

Metric	Outcomes
Number of Jobs Created/Filled	7
Businesses Served	324
Number of New Mentors Providing Business Assistance	4
Number of Businesses Expanded	3
People Trained	441
Credentials Awarded	194
Interns Placed	94
Number of students that completed a dual enrollment program	34
Number of acres advanced to higher tier per Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP)	348

VI: COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

The GO Virginia Region 6 website went through a complete refresh and was launched in FY25. The new website was designed to educate potential partners and stakeholders on the overall GO Virginia program, and the unique features that make up Region 6. This included a streamlined application page and process, along with a catalog of current and past GO Virginia Region 6 grant. The website has become an information hub for all things GO Virginia Region 6.



The second annual GO Virginia Region 6 Economic Development Summit was held on April 22nd, 2025, in downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia. The event opened with a welcome address from Congressman Eugene Vindman and continued with panels focused on a broad range of economic development topics: Childcare and the Workforce, Work-Based Learning, and VEDP Industry Sector Leads. Over 120 people attended the summit, which was a significant increase from 2024. The goal of the Summit is to bring together industry leaders, elected officials, economic development professionals, K-12 school divisions, and post-secondary institutions to discuss the current and future opportunities for collaboration in economic development.

Region 6 Support Organization staff made a targeted effort in FY25 to reach out and visit key industry partners in Region 6's Targeted Industry Clusters. These visits were made in conjunction with the Regional Talent Solutions and Business Outreach representative for our region from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and with the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board.

Rogue Oysters, Lancaster, VA

Staff also continued to hold Application Information Sessions every three months, rotating locations throughout the three sub-regions. These sessions have become more heavily attended over time and provide an opportunity for potential project partners to learn more about the application process, and to connect with potential partners to collaborate on projects.

VII: PROJECT PIPELINE

LEADER TO INNOVATOR: ADVANCING VIRGINIA SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE| VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE

Virginia's shellfish aquaculture industry is a national leader in production, generating hundreds of jobs, supporting working waterfronts, and contributing over $50 million annually to the state's economy. GO Virginia Regions 6 and 5 play a central role in this success, producing a majority of Virginia's oysters and clams. However, the industry's competitiveness is increasingly constrained by its reliance on foreign-designed gear and technology, primarily sourced from Canada, France, and Australia. Meanwhile, domestic competitors—such as Maryland, leveraging significant federal R&D investment, and Maine, fostering a robust culture of innovation—are advancing new technologies and strengthening their market positions.

MOBILE AI UNIT| CYBER BYTES FOUNDATION

The AI Mobile Unit is a transformative initiative designed to expand access to artificial intelligence (AI) literacy and workforce development opportunities across the region. By bringing technology and training directly into underserved communities, local school systems, and business hubs, the Mobile Unit will eliminate barriers to entry and create equitable pathways into the digital economy. This innovative program will deliver AI literacy education with the option to pursue industry-recognized credentials and earn credit toward a degree, ensuring participants not only gain valuable skills but also achieve tangible milestones in their educational and career journeys. The Mobile Unit will serve as a mobile classroom and resource hub, adaptable to meeting the unique needs of each locality.

INNOVATION AND TECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM | RIVERS REGION ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL

The expected outcomes of this grant will be the creation of a "one-stop" shop for entrepreneurs that provides answers to questions and referrals to appropriate programs or services resulting in a thriving and connected Region 6 entrepreneurial ecosystem with increased business start-up activity, a strong entrepreneur mentor community (entrepreneurs helping entrepreneurs), increased collaborations with: financial entities (venture capitalists, angel investors, banks, and available grants); academia (University of Mary Washington, Germanna Community College, Rappahannock Community College, and Virginia Institute of Marine Science), government entities (Economic Development Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Supervisors, etc.); and military bases (technology transfer opportunities, veteran opportunities).

MIDDLESEX COUNTY MARINE INDUSTRIAL PARK | MIDDLESEX COUNTY EDA

The Middlesex County EDA, in partnership with Mathews County EDA, would like to conduct due diligence on a recently acquired parcel in Middlesex County. The goal would be to advance the site on the VBRSP Tier System and market it as a Marine Industrial Park.

RCC COMPUTER NUMERICAL CONTROL (CNC) PROGRAM | RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Led by manufacturers in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, RCC will look at establishing a CNC program and creating a pipeline of employees for advanced manufacturing. This project has been heavily lead by industry need and will focus on updated curriculum, purchase of equipment, and tied to credentials.

VIII: COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilmember Name	Organization
John Anzivino, Chair	Middlesex County EDA/Citizen Member
Jeff Szyperski, Vice-Chair	Chesapeake Bank
Dr. Derek Aday	Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Kyle Allwine	Northern Neck Electric Coop
John Bateman	Lancaster County
Taryn Brice-Rowland	Rogue Oyster Company, Lancaster EDA
Rene Daniels	Spotsylvania County Public Schools
Jackie Davis	Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
Jan Erkert	Spangler Erkert and Associates
Vernon Green, Jr.	GCubed Inc./G3 Community Services
Ernisha Hall	Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce
Donna Hart	Virginia Properties Inc.
Stephanie Heinatz	Consociate Media
Pete Humes	Atlantic Union Bank
Shannon Kennedy	Rappahannock Community College
Cyndi Mack	Piovan UnaDyn
Ginni Matern	Matern Staffing
Melissa Sheffield	Smurfit Westrock
Joe Syslo	Matthews County EDA
Lindsey Watson	Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
Dr. 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, chip.boyles@gwregion.org

Deputy Director: Kate Gibson, kate.gibson@gwregion.org

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