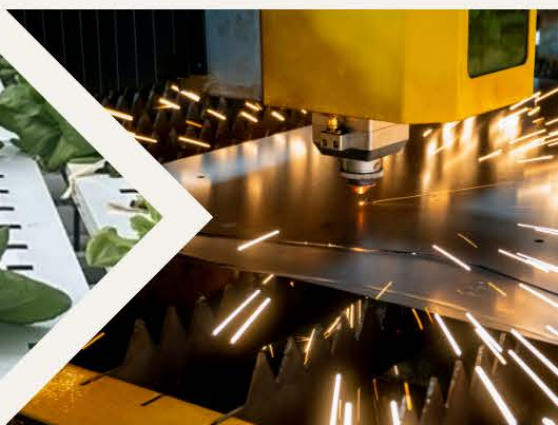
GO VIRGINIA
REGION 6

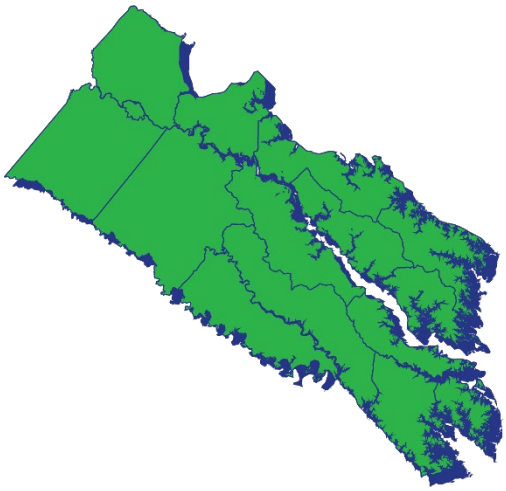
FY2026 ANNUAL REPORT



MARY BALL WASHINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL GO VIRGINIA REGION 6 FY26 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 (PD 16), the Northern Neck Planning District Commission (PD 17), and the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (PD 18). 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 historically 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 2025.

The Region 6 FY26 Annual Report will highlight the work done by staff and the Regional Council. FY26 priorities included the strategic use of per capita allocation funds for projects, diversifying representation on the Regional Council across industry clusters, realigning strategies with priority industry clusters, and completing the 2025 Growth & Diversification Plan Update.

FY 26 Target Sectors:

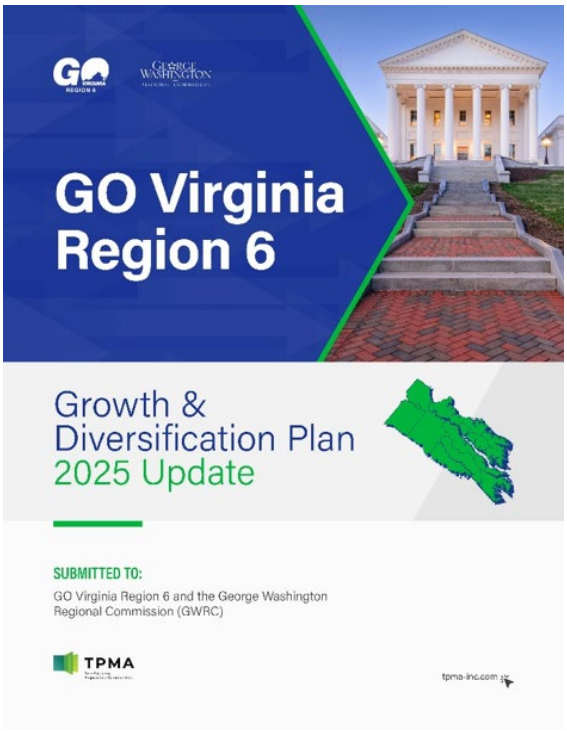
Aquaculture / Seafood / Commercial Fishing / Marine Industries
Forestry / Wood Products / Paper
Manufacturing
Distribution / Logistics
Information / Data Centers
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
Agriculture/Controlled Environment Agriculture

II: GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION PLAN

In October 2025, the GO Virginia Region 6 Council approved the 2025 Growth and Diversification (G&D) Plan. The G&D update took place over a 12-month period and included in-depth data analysis, business surveys, and stakeholder engagement.

In order to produce a plan that would prioritize actionable strategies, a detailed business survey was sent out to all Region 6 targeted industry clusters. The survey, along with industry stakeholder roundtables, informed the goals and strategies set forth in the G&D Plan update to ensure that Region 6 projects are first and foremost industry lead.

As a result, the Region 6 2025 G&D plan highlighted attainable strategies and goals that will inspire a robust pipeline of future projects.



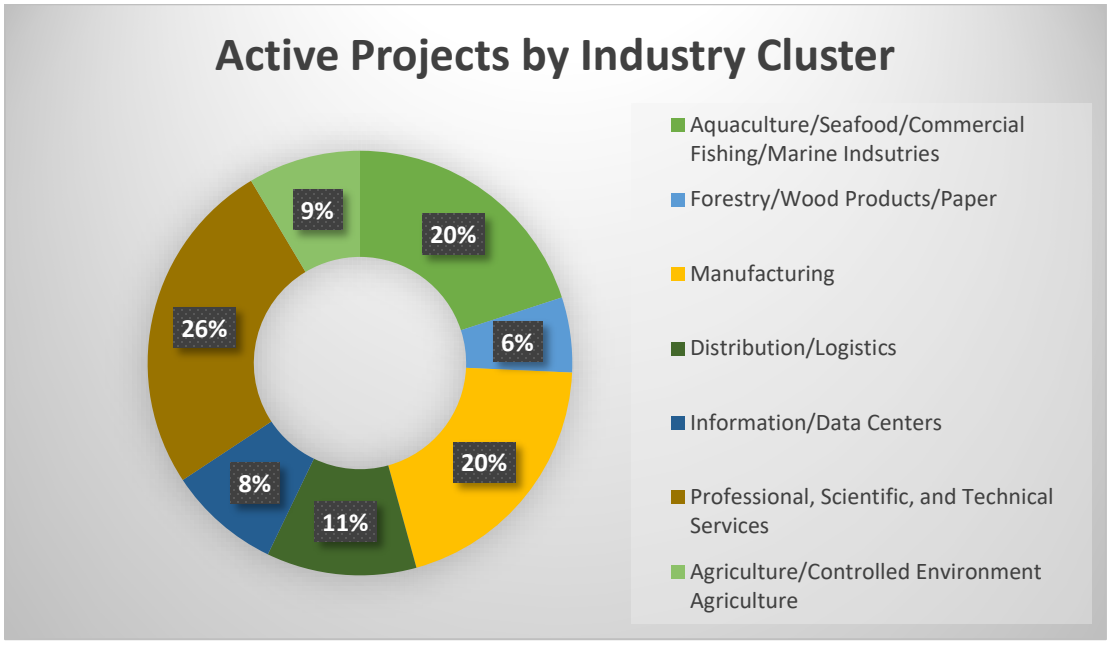
Main strategies identified were:

- Expanding regional talent pipelines by aligning training with high-growth clusters;
- Strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems, like developing innovation hubs and smart tech entrepreneurship initiatives;
- Advancing site readiness by prioritizing Tier 3 and Tier 4 site development;
- Closing skills gaps in high-demand occupations by increasing credentialing programs and expanding regional post-secondary offerings;
- Promoting cluster scale-up and export readiness by investing in logistics hubs and innovation infrastructure;
- Enhancing regional collaboration by establishing cluster working groups and regional authorities.

The Rappahannock Community College *CNC Machining* program, approved in FY26, focused on regional collaboration between localities and businesses across the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, drawing heavily on demonstrated industry need from area manufacturers. The partnership between industry, local economic development authorities, and the community college will create a program that provides a direct workforce pipeline to local, high-paying manufacturing jobs in both the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. This project was a direct result from strategy 1.1.1 “expand career pathways in high demand sectors like manufacturing.”

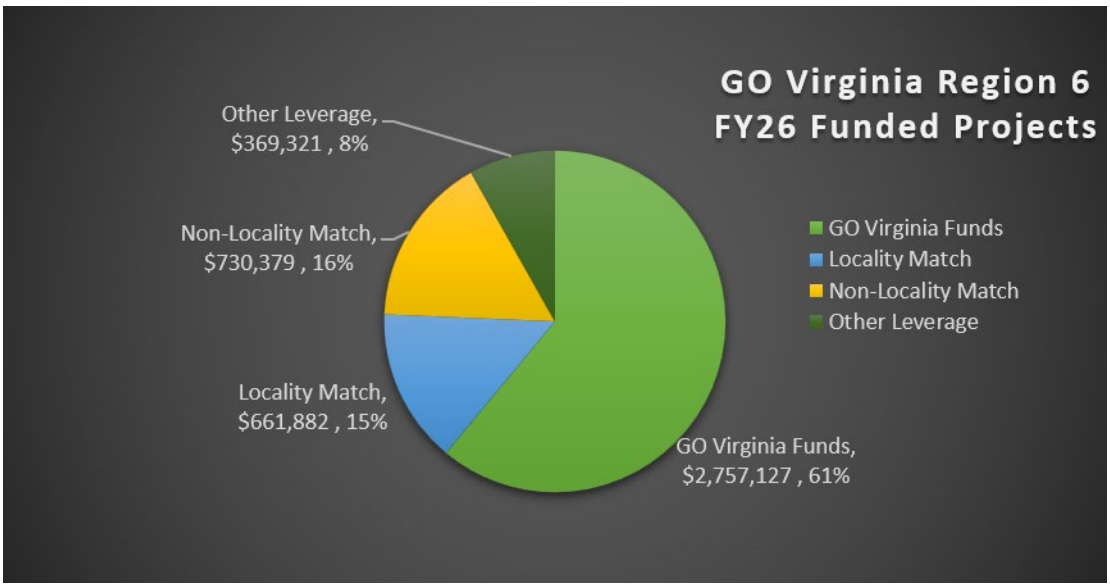
Strategy 1.1.1 as well as strategy 1.1.4, “promote awareness of cluster careers in schools…,” led to the Stafford County Public Schools *Extended and New Pathways with Stafford and Caroline Counties* project. In partnership with Caroline County Public Schools, Stafford County was awarded $965,601.00 in funding from Region 6 for the project. With strong collaboration between industry, K-12, Germanna Community College, and the University of Mary Washington, the project will create seven new CTE pathways whose curriculum and industry recognized credentials are directly informed by industry need in the region. Industry representatives included those from IT/Data Centers, Distribution and Logistics, and Professional Services. The project application demonstrated a strong tie between regional partners and educational collaboration.

The Region 6 Council reinforced its commitment to growing the seven priority industry clusters that represent the diverse economy of three subregions in Region 6. The majority of the projects active in FY26 were in the Professional Services cluster with 26%, while Aquaculture/Seafood/Marine Industries and Manufacturing both had 20% of the active projects. This breakdown is a representation of the unique assets each subregion brings to Region 6. Manufacturing and Professional Services span the whole region, while Aquaculture/ Seafood/Commercial Fishing/Marine Industries are historical and impactful industry clusters for the coastal areas of the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula. The concentration of Information and Data Centers projects primarily take place in Planning District 16. The Region 6 Council will continue to analyze cluster needs while keeping an eye on new and emerging opportunities for the region, such as Aerospace and Life Sciences Technologies.



III: SUMMARY OF PROJECTS IN FY26

Project	GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
RIVER TO TABLE – BLUE CATFISH PROCESSING AND MARKETING STUDY FOR THE NN AND MP	$99,840.00	$62,590.00	$0	$6,600.00
NORTHERN NECK SITES INVENTORY	$100,000.00	$50,000.00	$0	$0
FROM LEADER TO INNOVATOR: ADVANCING VIRGINIA SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE	$81,002.00	$9,794.00	$30,754.68	$45,196.34
EXTENDED AND NEW PATHWAYS WITH STAFFORD AND CAROLINE COUNTIES	$965,601.00	$482,800.77	$0	$11,075.00
RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMPUTER NUMERICAL CONTROL PROGRAM	$431,575.00	$15,711.92	$200,880.00	$25,650.00
AI MOBILE UNIT FOR WORKFORCE & EDUCATION	$1,079,108.65	$40,985.34	$498,744.59	$280,800.00
TOTAL FY26 PROJECT FUNDS:	$2,757,126.65	$661,882.03	$730,379.27	$369,321.34



RIVER TO TABLE – BLUE CATFISH PROCESSING AND MARKETING STUDY FOR THE NN AND MP | MIDDLESEX COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$99,840.00	$62,590.00	$0	$6,600.00

Middlesex County's Economic Development Authority (EDA) received funding to conduct a study to provide an initial summary of the state of the Blue Catfish industry—including harvesters, processors, and wholesale/retail sales—in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck regions. The study will outline options, establish priorities, and estimate probable costs for implementing findings and recommendations to promote, support, and expand businesses associated with Blue Catfish. It will also examine ways to eliminate bottlenecks in the supply chain and identify specific actions that local governments and the private sector can take to increase market entry and support the expansion of harvesting and sales of this species. In addition, the study will provide an asset map of existing and potential industry-related infrastructure, including ramps/landings, transportation and storage facilities, processing operations (fillets and by-products), manufacturing (non-food uses), retail, wholesale, and restaurant outlets.

NORTHERN NECK SITES INVENTORY | WESTMORELAND COUNTY

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$100,000.00	$50,000.00	$0	$0

Westmoreland County, in partnership with Lancaster County, received funding to conduct a coordinated sites inventory and prioritization to create a bankable pipeline of developable industrial and commercial sites in the Northern Neck.

The project will (1) assemble a standardized dataset for candidate parcels—ownership/control, zoning and comp-plan status, access, utility proximity/capacity (water, sewer, 3-phase power, gas, fiber), environmental constraints (floodplain, wetlands/RPA), and workforce/market fit; (2) verify or initiate VirginiaScan listings and confirm VEDP characterization tiers; (3) complete gap analyses with order-of-magnitude "cost-to-Tier-4" roadmaps for the sites; (4) validate assumptions via checks and interviews with owners and utilities (as applicable); and (5) deliver site sheets, GIS layers, and a sequenced advancement plan that positions these sites for GO Virginia/VBRSP Implementation within 0–6 months post–planning-grant closeout. This project anticipates reviewing approximately 20 sites total with an estimated 15 sites in Westmoreland County and 5 sites in Lancaster County.

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

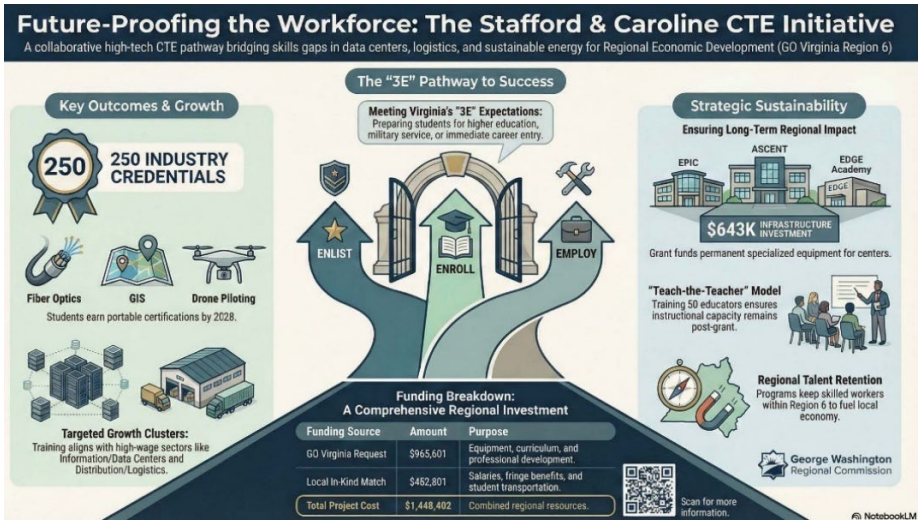
GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$81,002.00	$9,794.00	$30,754.68	$45,196.34

This planning initiative will build the foundation for Region 6 to become a national hub for aquaculture innovation by: Assessing industry needs and opportunities through structured engagement with growers, gear manufacturers, researchers, local government officials and policymakers through workshops and one-on-one meetings; Identifying high-impact innovation opportunities in gear design, aquaculture technology, and business models, with a fact-finding trip to Maine; Developing a roadmap for establishing a regional aquaculture innovation ecosystem, including prototyping facilities, collaborative R&D programs; and entrepreneurial support through a consensus-building approach in workshop. The project will be led by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in partnership with Old Dominion University (ODU), Virginia Tech (VT), Virginia Sea Grant, regional economic development organizations, and industry representatives.

EXTENDED AND NEW PATHWAYS WITH STAFFORD AND CAROLINE COUNTIES | STAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$965,601.00	$482,800.77	$0	$11,075.00

Stafford County Public Schools, in partnership with Caroline County Public Schools, were awarded a GO Virginia Region 6 implementation grant to expand their Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways in their already established Stafford Centers and the Academies of Caroline. These pathways would fill gaps supporting the IT/Data Centers, Distribution and Logistics, and Professional/Scientific/Technical services industry clusters. The main goal of the collaborative project between Stafford and Caroline School Districts is to leverage targeted investment to align secondary education with regional economic priorities, based on GOVA's Region 6 Growth and Diversification Plan and meet Virginia's "3E expectations" (enroll, enlist, employ). The project will establish deep collaborative practices between Stafford and Caroline County Public Schools, including co-developing curricula, aligning industry-recognized credentials, and conducting joint professional learning.



RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMPUTER NUMERICAL CONTROL PROGRAM| RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$431,575.00	$15,711.92	$200,880.00	$25,650.00

To meet the growing workforce demands of manufacturers in GO Virginia Region 6, Rappahannock Community College (RCC) will establish a comprehensive Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machining training program. The initiative's goal is to equip students with technical skills and industry-recognized credentials that prepare them for high-demand machining careers across the region. RCC will pursue a partnership-driven approach that combines new career pathways, state-of-the-art training facilities, and employer collaboration. By aligning with GO Virginia Region 6 growth strategies, the program will expand career opportunities, strengthen regional training capacity, and connect students directly to local industry needs. This project will create three new career pathways, provide training and credentials for thirty-six students, and employ thirty students as CNC machinists.

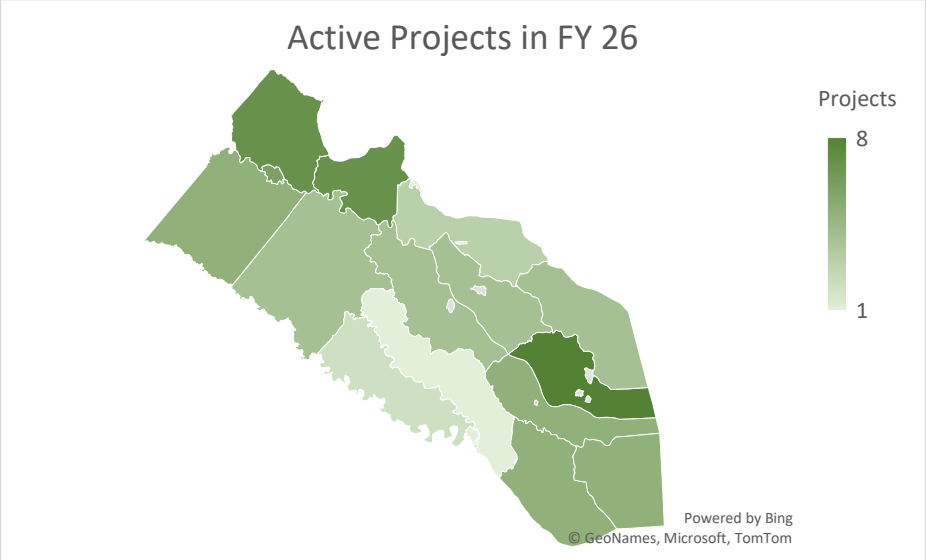
AI MOBILE UNIT FOR WORKFORCE & EDUCATION | CYBER BYTES FOUNDATION

GO Virginia Funds	Locality Match	Non-Locality Match	Other Leverage
$1,079,108.65	$40,985.34	$498,744.59	$280,800.00

Cyber Bytes Foundation, in partnership with ATI-UMW, received funding to establish a AI Mobile Unit for Workforce & Education. This is a multi-regional initiative designed to deliver AI literacy, ethics, prompting, and certification training directly to schools, workforce centers, and businesses across Regions 6 and 9.
This initiative addresses a critical workforce gap by equipping high school students, teachers, and adult learners with industry-recognized AI competencies, linking CompTIA AI certifications to entry-level jobs across Virginia's traded-sector industries—Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; IT/Data Centers; and IT & Communications. The mobile delivery model ensures equitable access across rural and underserved communities, removing the technical and policy barriers often encountered within school networks. This flexibility allows secure deployment of high-quality AI programming that builds on proven frameworks already piloted in Virginia schools, ensuring those trained possess the foundational AI skills employers demand.

IV: REGIONAL COLLABORATION & PARTNER SUPPORT

In FY26, the Region 6 Council and staff continued to promote projects across all of Region 6, highlighting the unique qualities of the three subregions: Planning District 16, 17, and 18. Projects highlighted the shared industry clusters across subregions, such as Manufacturing, as well as distinct geographic industries such as Aquaculture and Data Center careers. The Council also prioritized increased and closer collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners.



FY26 also brought about new collaborations and partnerships with higher education. Virginia Institute of Marine Science's *From Leader to Innovator: Advancing Virginia Shellfish Aquaculture* project brought together researchers from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Old Dominion University, and Virginia Tech Seafood AREC to collaborate with economic development professionals and shellfish growers across Virginia's coastal regions, including the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Eastern Shore. Together, they identified high-impact innovation opportunities designed to expand, strengthen, and scale the Commonwealth's shellfish aquaculture industry.

FY26 also marked the launch of a new super-regional partnership with Region 9 through the Cyber Bytes Foundation's *Mobile AI Unit for Workforce and Education* project. Funded through a Statewide Competitive Grant, the initiative was selected for its collaborative approach, bringing together localities in both Region 6 and Region 9. This marks the first time Region 6 has served as the lead applicant on a competitive statewide project in partnership with neighboring Region 9. The project will provide students with access to AI-focused learning modules, industry-recognized certificates, and dual enrollment opportunities through Germanna Community College, Rappahannock Community College, Laurel Ridge Community College, and the University of Mary Washington.

REGION 6 PARTNERS

- Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
- City of Fredericksburg EDA
- Cyber Bytes Foundation
- Essex County EDA
- Fredericksburg Area Chamber of Commerce
- George Washington Regional Commission
- Germanna Community College
- Gloucester County EDA
- Greater Reedville Association
- KCB Oyster Holdings
- King and Queen County EDA
- King George County EDA
- Lancaster County EDA
- Matheson Oyster Company
- Mathews County EDA
- Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority
- Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
- Middlesex County EDA
- Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren
- Northern Neck Planning District Commission
- Northumberland County EDA
- Old Dominion University
- Rappahannock Community College
- Rappahannock Oyster Company
- Rise Resilience Innovations
- Rivers Region Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Council
- RIVERE
- Stafford County EDA
- University of Mary Washington
- Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- Virginia Sea Grant
- Virginia Tech Center for Economic Development and Community Engagement
- Virginia Tech Seafood AREC
- Virginia's Innovation Crossroads Alliance
- Westmoreland County

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

During FY26, Region 6 projects achieved significant outcomes across 8 active projects. This impact directly affected the Region 6 targeted industry clusters:

- Professional Services
- IT/Data Centers
- Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, Marine Industries
- Manufacturing
- Distribution/Logistics
- Agriculture/Controlled Environment Agriculture

Projects metrics obtained in FY26 included:

Metric	Outcomes
Number of Jobs Created/Filled	203
Businesses Served	195
Number of New Businesses Created	6
Number of Mentors Engaged	11
Total Capital Raised	$269,000.00
People Trained	624
Number of new interns placed	81
Number of new apprenticeships created	7
Number of credentials awarded	319
Number of students that completed a dual enrollment program	80
Businesses Expanded	41

The *RCC New Career Training Center* project was able to train 141 people and award 131 credentials across its welding and diesel programs which support the manufacturing industry cluster. This included 80 students that completed a dual enrollment program on the Weems, VA campus.

In addition, the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board's *Career Advancement and Resource Education (CARE)* project was able to fill 184 jobs in FY26 and serve 50 businesses with direct opportunities for industry to form sector partnerships that will inform training pathways. The CARE project was able to directly connect businesses with skilled workers through strategic partnerships with community colleges, University of Mary Washington, and Virginia Career Works Centers.

The Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce's *Expanding Business Ecosystems (EBE) Business Accelerator* project has been able to serve 110 businesses and raise $269,000 in capital. The accelerator project will continue to build on the success of the project in FY27.

VI: COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

The Region 6 Council held the third annual GO Virginia Region 6 Economic Development Summit in April2026 at the University of Mary Washington Dahlgren campus in King George, VA. The Summit, attended by over 120 people, brought together economic developers, elected officials, locality staff, and regional stakeholders from across Region 6. Industry panels comprised of local businesses, training providers, and representatives from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership spoke about the challenges and opportunities within their respective industries. Represented industries included Cybersecurity and AI, Manufacturing, and Aquaculture. This year's summit included breakout sessions where attendees could learn more about successful GO Virginia projects and funding sources from other state programs at the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Summit presents an opportunity for partners across all of Region 6 who normally would not be in the same room, to come together with the common goal of advancing and diversifying the Region 6 economy.

Industry and partner site visits were a priority for the Region 6 Council and staff in FY26. The Council had the opportunity to tour the Healthy Harvest Fresh aquaponics farm in Warsaw, VA after a quarterly council meeting, along with staff from the Department of Housing and Community Development. Other site visits included visiting commercial fishing and aquaculture companies in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula to learn more about industry needs and opportunities for growth. Finally, staff attended multiple region-wide stakeholder engagement sessions with project partners to discuss the overall economic future for the region.

Region 6 continued to engage with stakeholders with targeted social media posts as well as monthly newsletters highlighting economic development news, project updates, and upcoming events in the region. The goal of this outreach is to not only keep current partners and stakeholders informed on projects and activities in Region 6, but also to engage with new and potential partners to build the project pipeline.

VII: PROJECT PIPELINE

FREDERICKSBURG SUBREGION SITE INVENTORY | VIRIGNIAS INNOVATION CROSSROADS ALLIANCE

The Virginia's Innovation Crossroads Alliance at UMW (VICA), formerly the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance (FRA), will serve as the applicant for this coordinated regional site inventory and prioritization effort to create a pipeline of developable industrial and commercial sites across the Fredericksburg Region (PDC16).
The planning effort will produce:

- Standardized data for approximately 20 candidate sites (~4 sites per locality).
- Site tier verification and VirginiaScan listings.
- Gap analyses with cost-to-Tier-4 development roadmaps.
- Ranked site pipeline and advancement plan.
- Implementation playbook with scopes, cost ranges, and next steps.

REGION 6 GROWTH ALLIANCE INITIATIVE | RIVERS REGION ENTREPRENEURSHIP COUNCIL

This proposal builds on the April 2026 Region 6 Regional Entrepreneurial Initiative (REI) planning grant by combining networking events, a pre-accelerator/accelerator, and technology commercialization efforts with Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division (NSWCDD) to increase new business formation, scale-up activity, and investment in Region 6.

AGRICULTURAL CAREER PATHWAYS PLANNING INITIATIVE | LANCASTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Lancaster County Public Schools proposes to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study to determine the viability, workforce demand, and implementation requirements for developing career pathways in Aquaponics, Oyster Production, Fish Production, and Controlled Environment Agriculture at Lancaster High School. The proposed planning project directly aligns with the GO Virginia Region 6 Growth & Diversification Plan by addressing workforce development needs within the region's priority Aquaculture, Seafood, Commercial Fishing, and Marine Industries cluster while strengthening the talent pipeline necessary to support long-term economic growth.

MARINE INDUSTRIES COMMERCE PARK & WORKFORCE TRAINING FACILITIES | MIDDLESEX COUNTY EDA

Middlesex County EDA is applying for a feasibility study to look at proposed development of a marine industries commerce park and a marine trades training facility. The study will assess how to best plan and develop buildings suitable for private and public sector use on approximately 20 acres of land purchased by the Middlesex Economic Development Authority in October 2025. This study will analyze the regional need for a marine training facility in partnership with RCC.

REGION 6 & 5 HISTORIC WORKING WATERFRONT INVENTORY | VIRGINIA TECH CECE

Virginia Tech CECE will partner with localities in the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Eastern Shore to conduct a study of historic working waterfronts with the goal of identifying sites that could be converted into active working waterfronts for aquaculture, commercial fishing, and marine industry.

VIII: COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilmember Name	Organization
Kyle Allwine	Stack Infrastructure
John Anzivino	Middlesex County EDA/Citizen Member
John Bateman	Lancaster County
Taryn Brice-Rowland	Rogue Oysters & Lancaster EDA
Sarah Chiles	Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
Rene Daniels	Spotsylvania County Public Schools
Jackie Davis	Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
Ryan DeWeese	Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center
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
Tina Lance	Germanna Community College
Cyndi Mack	Universal Dynamics
Monty Mason	Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Ginni Matern	Matern Staffing
Melissa Sheffield	Smurfit Westrock
Joe Syslo	Mathews County EDA (Retired Business)
Jeff Szyperski	Chesapeake Bank
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