



Virginia Growth and Opportunity Fund (GO Virginia)

Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative Guidance

Section I: GO Virginia Program Intent

GO Virginia’s goal is to facilitate regional collaboration to grow and diversify the economy through supporting projects leading to the creation of more higher paying jobs through revenue derived from out-of-state sources. Programs and projects recommended by the regional councils and approved by the board shall be consistent with the strategies and targeted industry clusters outlined in the regional growth and diversification plan.

Section II: Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative

In 2018, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) engaged TEconomy Partners, LLC to provide each GO Virginia region with an independent and objective assessment of its entrepreneurial development position, to facilitate a situational assessment of the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, and to help identify priority actions to strengthen the ecosystem. Each region was provided with the baseline assessment that can be utilized by the regional council to develop a pipeline of initial projects to support regional entrepreneurship.

A significant finding of the TEconomy reports was that each GO Virginia region would benefit from the identification of an entrepreneurial coordinating entity to advance regional ecosystem development activities. This coordinating entity, would identify opportunities and needs within the targeted traded sectors and facilitate implementation.

Regional Councils can currently apply to the state board to utilize their per capita funding to support enhanced capacity building projects, however the match requirements make this particular initiative challenging to implement. In order to facilitate implementation of this initiative the Growth and Opportunity Board can encourage regions to consider implementation through approving specific match guidelines and guidance that is outlined below. By encouraging the use of per capita funds and approving match requirements that better fit these types of proposals, the Board can enable Regional Entrepreneurship Proposals to come forward as regions demonstrate the capacity and desire to move forward on this initiative. This initiative is not a set aside of funding, but rather a new initiative that can continue to advance based on regional priorities and capacity. Once regions finish per capita projects under this initiative, they can also apply for future per capita funding for implementation under regular program guidelines. Future implementation efforts are also eligible for competitive funding if they have an opportunity to be scaled to more than one GO Virginia region.



DRAFT Proposals Requiring Approval of the Growth and Opportunity Board: To enable efforts to support the Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative, the Growth and Opportunity Board authorizes DHCD to accept per capita applications that will allow regions to bring proposals to the Board for consideration with clarity on specific match requirements and guidance on information needed for the Board to consider proposals.

It is envisioned that these grants will enable the coordinating entity to:

- a) Develop a strategy for implementing the TEconomy recommendations or other concepts derived from the Stakeholder engagement process that aligns with the regional growth and diversification plan,
- b) Develop a structure for advancing the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and
- c) Develop strategies to sustain the initiative after the initial GO Virginia grant.

The coordinating entity may use a dedicated staff member or an outside consultant to assist with the delivery of the items outlined in these guidelines. Each proposed plan shall include specific deliverables and metrics which will be used to measure success.

Each regional council will provide oversight of the coordinating entity, which will provide leadership to develop projects to implement the strategies and structures identified through this process.

The Growth and Opportunity Board authorizes the following policies for Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative proposals.

1. The Board invites interested regional councils to identify a coordinating entity which may apply for up to \$300,000 in per capita funding to develop a regional entrepreneurial investment plan, based on the recommendations of TEconomy and other input from the Regional Council and interested stakeholders.
2. The \$300,000 funding amount may support the initiative for no more than two years, but Regions are encouraged to produce project outcomes quickly in order to move to implementation of the regional plan.
3. The Growth and Opportunity Board will waive the local match requirement and the \$1:1 matching requirement for all requests for Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative proposals that undertake the coordinating entity enhanced capacity building project given the exceptional economic opportunity of the initiative, but will still require the minimum code of Virginia match of half the grant (e.g. A \$300,000 request will require \$150,000 match of non-state matching sources).

Section III: Application Process

Although the application process will open upon adoption of this policy with the first grants available in June 2019, it is understood that not every region will be interested in or ready to apply for this funding. Only those GO Virginia Regions that are interested and ready to pursue this funding are encouraged to apply. With oversight by the regional councils, the coordinating entity in each region that is interested in applying to complete the coordinating entity tasks will be tasked with advancing a regional entrepreneurial investment plan and prioritizing strategic investments with input from regional entrepreneurial stakeholders.



In addition to the strategies and structure to be developed through this grant, these regional entrepreneurial investment plans should present potential pipeline projects that will fill the identified gaps, including recommended leadership, potential sources of matching funds, and timeline for implementation.

Each regional council that seeks to implement this subprogram will apply to DHCD through the Centralized Application Management System (CAMS) which is utilized for all GO Virginia funding applications. Applications shall be submitted in CAMS by the established quarterly deadlines for per capita funds. Regional councils will be asked to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the regional coordinating entity for this initiative?
2. Who is the primary point of contact?
3. What process did the regional council utilize to identify and select their coordinating entity?
4. Were all entities interested in serving in a coordinating role considered and what criteria was applied to determine the most appropriate coordinating entity? The Regional Council must utilize a selection process that ensures competing organizations are encouraged to strengthen regional collaboration through this application process. Documentation of the selection process must be included in the application.
5. What qualifications were considered and why was this entity selected?
6. What experience does the coordinating entity have in entrepreneurial ecosystem development?
7. Will the regional coordinating entity utilize existing capacity, or create new position(s) for this effort?
8. How will the regional council financially sustain the coordinator's efforts beyond this GO Virginia funding?
9. Outline the method that the regional council will use to oversee the coordinating entity and which will actively work to develop potential projects for future funding.
10. Attachment: Project Metrics and Outcomes
11. Attachment: Project Timeline with Milestones
12. Attachment: Project Budget

Applications submitted to DHCD for consideration will be reviewed by DHCD's GO Virginia staff and reported to the board for consideration at the next board meeting.