



Region 9 Rural Entrepreneurship Action Plan

April 30, 2020





BEGIN.

Key project team members



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Project Timeline

Task	Nov			Dec			Jan				Feb				March				April								
	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	
Project Kickoff																											
Review Documents																											
Interviews (Visits 1&2)																											
Case Studies																											
Preliminary Report																											
Review with Council (Call)																											
Prepare Plan																											
Final Presentation (Visit 3)																											

How We Got Here

- Venture Hub Project (Completed October 2019)
 - Biz Plan for new “Hub” space in Charlottesville/Albemarle
 - Local Project Team now working on Implementation
- But, what about other parts of Region 9?
 - Rural Entrepreneurship Project (December 2019-April 2020)
- Rural recommendations can move forward with or w/o Venture Hub in place
- Project Objective:

Whatever resources and support are made available to a new business owner in downtown Charlottesville should also be available to the entrepreneur in Warrenton, Louisa, Culpeper, or Lovingston.

Principles for Rural Ecosystem Work

(and the Venture Hub too)

- **Serve all entrepreneurs**—from venture-ready tech firms to home-based businesses
- Build an **open and welcoming** environment in **every** Region 9 community.
- **Embrace the diversity of Region 9**, defined in geographic as well as demographic terms
- **Programming will be focused** to support the unique challenges of different segments of the target customer base

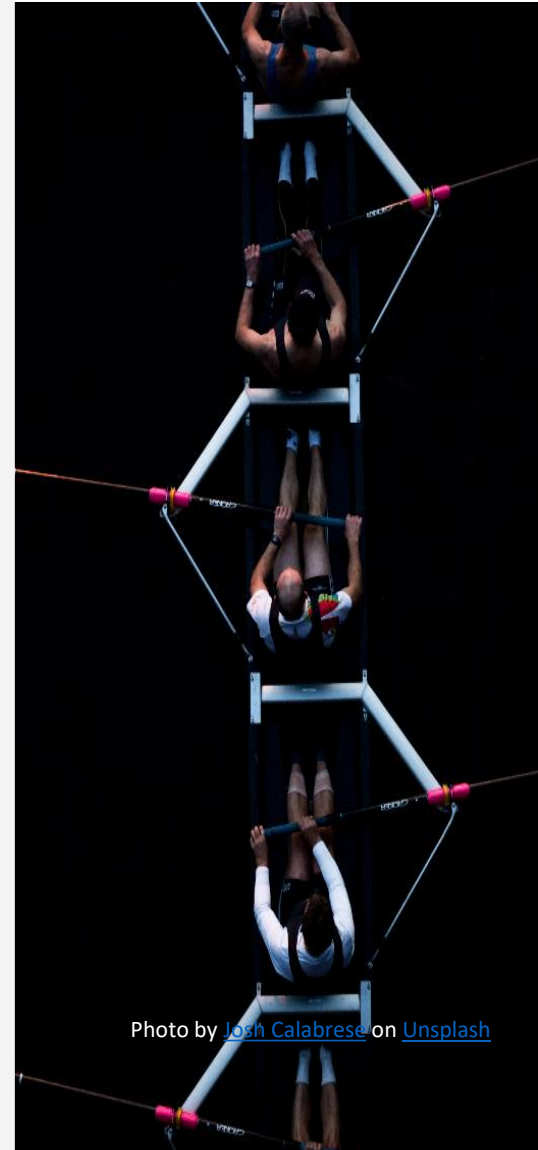


Photo by [Josh Calabrese](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Lessons learned

- ▶ Local Customization
- ▶ Engage All
- ▶ Entrepreneur Leadership
- ▶ Capital Linkages
- ▶ Power of Youth Entrepreneurship
- ▶ Space Matters
- ▶ Tell The Story
- ▶ Don't Do it Alone

Proposed Program: A Snapshot

Challenge	Recommendation
A Home for Entrepreneurs in Every County	1. Coworking / Entrepreneurial Center Grant Program
Easier Access to Resources	2. Region 9 Passport
Streamlined Permitting and Licensing	3. Business Navigators
Access to Equity Capital	4. Expanded Outreach to Rural Counties
Specialized Resources for Food and Beverage Manufacturers	5. Resource Navigation Portal
Youth Entrepreneurship	6. Review Process; Designated Ombudsperson
Diversity	7. Rural Fund and Investor Training
	8. Food Enterprise Center/Commercial Kitchen at Carver Center
	9. Expand E-squared program
	10. Promote entrepreneurship to underserved communities including minorities, women, veterans, and ex-convicts

A Home For Entrepreneurs

- Create a Coworking Space/Network Hub in Every County
 - Space could be public or private
 - Or Co-Located with other Facilities
 - Housed in an iconic building designed to facilitate connections and collaborations
- Develop a collaborative grant application to GO Virginia to establish locations and kick-off programming
 - Estimate: \$50,000 per county
- Coworking Passport
 - Provide shared access to facilities across Region 9
 - Build Regional awareness
 - Enhance Partnerships



Easier Access to Resources

- Support 2 regional Business Navigators focused on supporting rural entrepreneurs
 - In partnership with SBDC, EDCs, and other service providers
 - Linked to Venture Hub
- Coaching Services include:
 - Business Concierge
 - Resource Navigation
 - Ecosystem Cheerleading
- Include one coach with food/ag focus??
- Regional Ecosystem Calendar





Streamlined Permitting and Licensing

- Develop processes for “entrepreneur-friendly” regulatory review efforts
- Designate “Small Business Ombudsman” at County or Regional Levels

Equity Capital



- Support rural ventures facing “valley of death”
 - Funding range (\$50K to \$1m)
 - Links to Charlottesville, DC, or Richmond?
- Develop plan to support regional angel group
- Introduce rural focused angel investor training/support

Youth Entrepreneurship

- Area of regional advantage
 - Excellent programs underway in Culpeper and Fauquier
- Create regional network to:
 - Share program ideas
 - Engage every student in Region 9
 - Expand non-school programs
 - Support regional biz plan competition



Focus on Food/Ag Entrepreneurship

- Area of Strong Regional Advantage
 - Food/Ag is 2nd largest sector for regional startups (TEconomy Partners, 2018)
 - World Class Firms already here
 - Proximity to Major Markets
- Build Stronger Link between Innovation and Food/Ag Economies
- Support Food Enterprise Center project (Culpeper)



Build a More Diverse Ecosystem

- Regions growing immigrant population not engaged in ecosystem
- New programming targeted to underserved groups is needed
 - Latinx
 - African-American
 - New Immigrants
 - Ex-Offenders
 - Veterans
- Link to Existing Assets
 - Fauquier MEC Veteran Programming
 - Local Economy Working Group (UVA)

Next Steps?

- Formal Presentation to Regional Council (Today)
- Incorporate your Feedback
- Create Work Plans for Key Action Items
- Link Ecosystem work to other challenge areas
 - Broadband
 - Affordable Housing
 - COVID-19 Response & Recovery



Questions and Discussion



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