



# GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION PLAN

GO Virginia Region 1  
FALL 2025 | FIFTH EDITION

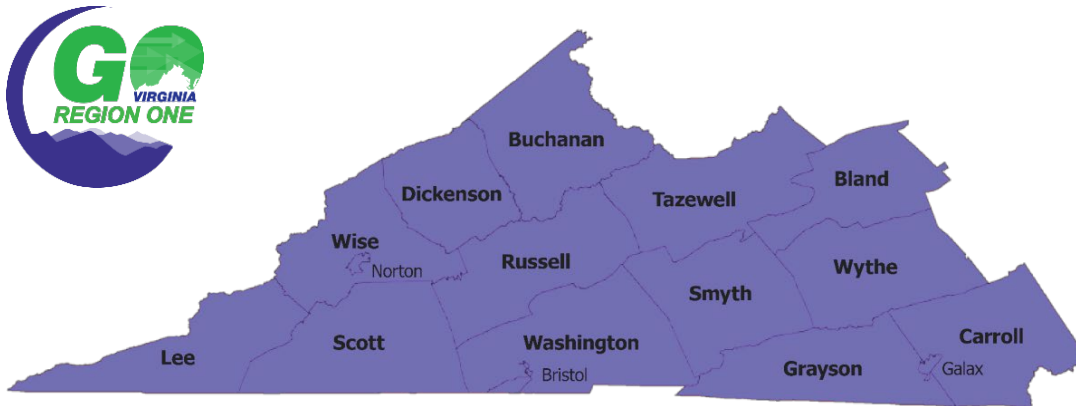


## Region 1 Vision

*Southwest Virginia is a dynamic and resilient region, powered by a diverse economy and thriving communities that attract and retain talent.*

## Region 1 Mission

*We invest in the full potential of Southwest Virginia- its people, communities, natural landscapes, and infrastructure- to cultivate a thriving economy rooted in innovation, collaboration, and industry diversification*



## GO Virginia's Overarching Goals

1. Create higher paying jobs
2. Promote regional/state collaboration
3. Generate out-of-state revenue
4. Diversify and strengthen the economy

*\*Note: This document is not a strategic economic development plan for Southwest Virginia, nor is it envisioned to be comprehensive in addressing all the challenges that face the region. This plan highlights priority areas that achieve GO Virginia's goals while remaining flexible, as the region's circumstances evolve or new ideas and opportunities emerge.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION PLAN .....	5
METHODOLOGY .....	6
GO VIRGINIA REGION 1 WORK GROUPS: DRIVING COMMUNITY-INFORMED STRATEGY .....	7
<i>Talent Development Subcommittee</i> .....	7
<i>Economic Development &amp; Infrastructure Subcommittee</i> .....	7
<i>Entrepreneurship, Small Business &amp; Innovation Subcommittee</i> .....	7
REGION 1 OVERVIEW.....	8
HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRESS.....	8
<i>Regional Collaboration</i> .....	9
<i>Regional Participation</i> .....	10
TARGETED INDUSTRIES & STRATEGIES.....	11
<b>INTRODUCTION: PULLING THE LEVERS OF REGIONAL RENEWAL.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>GO VIRGINIA REGION 1 MAP.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SWVA BY THE NUMBERS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
REGION 1 BACKGROUND AND LABOR SHED.....	17
ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DATA ANALYSIS 2025 OVERVIEW .....	19
<i>Educational Attainment</i> .....	23
<i>Employment</i> .....	25
TARGETED INDUSTRY SECTORS .....	27
OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND .....	28
<i>Current Demand</i> .....	28
<i>Demand by educational level</i> .....	31
<i>Long-Term Demand</i> .....	32
<i>Target Industries' Demand</i> .....	36
OCCUPATIONAL SUPPLY ANALYSIS .....	38
<i>Occupational Gaps</i> .....	38
<i>Occupational Surplus</i> .....	40
<b>REGION 1 PRIORITIES.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>PRIMARY REGIONAL TARGET SECTORS.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>SWVA BEYOND THE NUMBERS.....</b>	<b>46</b>
REGION 1 INDUSTRY TARGETS .....	46
<i>Advanced Manufacturing</i> .....	48
<i>Agriculture/Food &amp; Beverage Manufacturing</i> .....	49
<i>Energy and Minerals</i> .....	51
<i>Information &amp; Emerging Technology</i> .....	53
<i>Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing</i> .....	54
REGION 1 GROWTH STRATEGIES .....	59
<i>Talent Development</i> .....	60
<i>Sites &amp; Infrastructure</i> .....	63
<i>Innovation &amp; Scale Up Support</i> .....	67

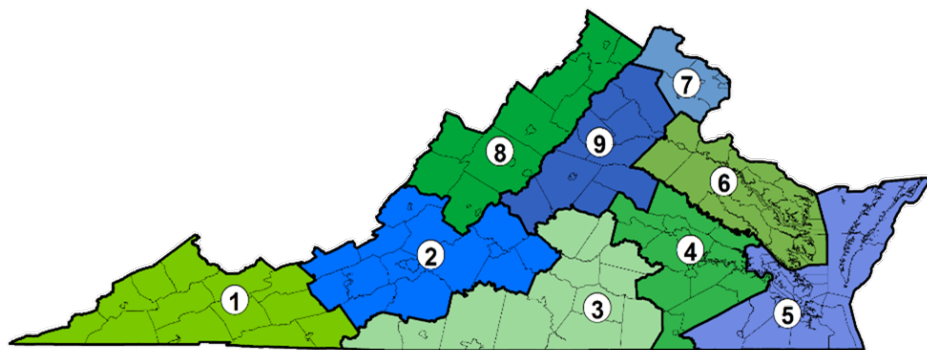
Other Regional Strategies.....	69
<b>REGION 1 PROJECTS OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>70</b>
GO VIRGINIA REGION 1 IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY .....	70
GO VIRGINIA REGION 1 TARGET INDUSTRY INVESTMENTS .....	75
GO VIRGINIA REGION 1 INVESTMENTS.....	79
PROCESS FOR APPLY FOR GO VIRGINIA FUNDING .....	82
PROJECT MONITORING, DATA TRACKING, AND BENCHMARKING.....	83
PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY AND POTENTIAL MATCH.....	83
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>85</b>
APPENDIX 1: HEALTHCARE GAPS IN GO VIRGINIA REGION 1 .....	86
APPENDIX 2: SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA HEALTHCARE OCCUPATIONS IN VIRGINIA'S 2024 HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS LIST .....	103
APPENDIX 3: GO VIRGINIA REGIONAL PARTNERS .....	104
APPENDIX 4: REGION ONE APPROVED PROJECTS .....	109
APPENDIX 5: REVISION LOG.....	129

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now in its fifth edition, the GO Virginia Region 1 Growth and Diversification Plan reflects eight years of shared vision, strategic action, and regional collaboration. Building on the foundations laid in 2017 and expanded through updates in 2019, 2021, and 2023, this 2025 plan reaffirms Region 1's commitment to economic resilience while adapting to emerging opportunities and challenges. It serves not only as a roadmap, but also as a living document that evolves in tandem with the region's aspirations and assets.

GO Virginia—formally known as the Virginia Initiative for Growth and Opportunity—was created through bipartisan legislation during the 2016 General Assembly session to spur innovation in economic development. Rooted in private-sector leadership and local partnership, this statewide initiative empowers each of Virginia's nine regions to chart its path for high-wage job creation and industry diversification. Regional collaboration and workforce alignment remain central pillars of the program's design.

Region 1 encompasses thirteen counties and three independent cities across Southwest Virginia. The Region 1 Council comprises leaders from diverse sectors—business, education, workforce development, and community development—who share a commitment to building a more inclusive and competitive regional economy. UVA Wise serves as the Region 1 support organization, providing coordination and capacity-building for applicants and subgrantees. Statewide guidance and technical support are provided by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).



This 2025 edition not only evaluates the impact of past priorities but also offers refined strategies for accelerating growth. It aligns regional investment with evolving industries, infrastructure development, and emerging talent pathways—while addressing vital enablers like childcare, housing, and healthcare access—by bridging legacy strengths with new ambition. Region 1 positions itself to lead the way in resilient and diversified economic development across the Commonwealth.

## Growth and Diversification Plan

The 2025 GO Virginia Region 1 Growth and Diversification Plan offers a refreshed and forward-looking framework to identify, prioritize, and respond to the economic opportunities and challenges unique to Southwest Virginia. Designed to guide the Region 1 Council in evaluating and advancing high-impact projects, the plan leverages GO Virginia grant funds to support collaborative, multi-locality initiatives that foster innovation, resilience, and the creation of higher-wage jobs.

This plan provides strategic direction across four core focus areas:

**Developing Talent Pipelines:** Region 1 continues to invest in talent development strategies that align with industry needs and regional workforce goals. Through partnerships with educational institutions, workforce partners, and employers, the Council supports initiatives that strengthen career pathways, expand

credentialing opportunities, and address critical gaps in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and technology.

**Growing Existing Businesses:** Recognizing the role of established companies as drivers of economic stability and growth, Region 1 prioritizes efforts to help businesses scale, innovate, and access new markets. Tailored support programs and targeted resources are designed to meet the evolving needs of firms within the region's priority industry clusters.

**Encouraging Entrepreneurial Activity:** Entrepreneurship remains a cornerstone of Region 1's diversification strategy. The Council actively supports ecosystem-building efforts that provide entrepreneurs with access to capital, mentorship, technical assistance, and collaborative spaces. Recent momentum in startup programming and regional connectivity has laid the groundwork for scalable innovation and inclusive job creation.

**Advancing Joint Site and Infrastructure Development:** Infrastructure readiness is essential to attracting and retaining businesses. Region 1 continues to identify and invest in strategic sites, leveraging tools such as the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program and Regional Industrial Facility Authorities (RIFAs). Broadband expansion, utility upgrades, and site certification efforts are central to this strategy.

While this Growth and Diversification Plan reflects Region 1's strategic priorities and aligns with GO Virginia's statewide goals, it is not intended to serve as a comprehensive economic development plan for Southwest Virginia. Instead, it offers a flexible, responsive blueprint that evolves with the region—grounded in collaboration, informed by data, and driven by the shared ambition to build a more resilient and prosperous future.

## **Methodology**

In alignment with recently updated guidelines from the GO Virginia State Board, all regions are now required to conduct a biennial review of their Growth and Diversification Plans and complete a corresponding template documenting that review. This process provides each regional council with the opportunity to reflect on progress, reaffirm commitment to targeted industries and strategic goals, and revise the plan as needed to remain responsive to evolving regional priorities.

For Region 1, this review process served not only as a compliance exercise but as a strategic opportunity to produce a refreshed edition of the Growth and Diversification Plan—one that continues to guide impactful project development and complements broader regional economic development efforts.

As in previous years, the update process was based on stakeholder engagement and data-driven analysis. Region 1 emphasized gathering input from a wide range of partners and stakeholders, ensuring that the plan reflects the region's collective vision and needs.

Chmura Economics & Analytics once again provided an updated economic and workforce analysis, offering insights into demographic trends, the evolving economic landscape, growth trajectories of targeted industry sectors, and persistent gaps in occupations and skills critical to Region 1's competitiveness.

The Region 1 Council continues to view this Growth and Diversification Plan as a living document—one that will evolve alongside new action plans, feasibility studies, and stakeholder conversations. This iterative approach ensures that the plan remains flexible, forward-looking, and responsive to the dynamic conditions shaping Southwest Virginia's economy.



## GO Virginia Region 1 Work Groups: Driving Community-Informed Strategy

GO Virginia Region 1 is committed to ensuring that the strategic initiatives reflect the real needs, aspirations, and opportunities of Southwest Virginia. To achieve this, the Council relies on the insight and dedication of three specialized work groups—each composed of council members, regional leaders, practitioners, and stakeholders who bring deep expertise and lived experience from across all three planning districts.

These work groups serve as listening posts and innovation engines. They help the Council to stay grounded in the realities of the communities while identifying forward-looking strategies that support economic diversification and resilience. Their mission statements reflect the collaborative spirit and regional pride that define this approach.

The insights and recommendations generated by these work groups are foundational to the development of the Region 1 Growth and Diversification Plan. Through regular meetings, stakeholder engagement, and data-informed dialogue, each group identifies emerging trends, regional challenges, and strategic opportunities. Their contributions ensure that the plan is not only visionary but also deeply rooted in the lived experience of regional communities—reflecting the voices of educators, business leaders, local governments, and entrepreneurs across all three planning districts.

### Talent Development Subcommittee

**Mission:** The Talent Development Subcommittee for GO Virginia Region 1 aims to unite K–12 schools and their Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, higher education institutions, Chambers of Commerce, and local industries to enhance workforce development. By fostering collaboration across these sectors, the subcommittee ensures a skilled talent pipeline that meets the evolving needs of Southwest Virginia's economy.

### Economic Development & Infrastructure Subcommittee

**Mission:** The GO Virginia Region 1 Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee is dedicated to serving the communities of Southwest Virginia by gathering and sharing vital information with the Region 1 Council. Its mission is to ensure that approved projects align with the unique needs and aspirations of the region, fostering sustainable growth and enhancing quality of life. The committee acts as a trusted bridge between stakeholders and decision-makers, creating a meaningful and lasting impact.

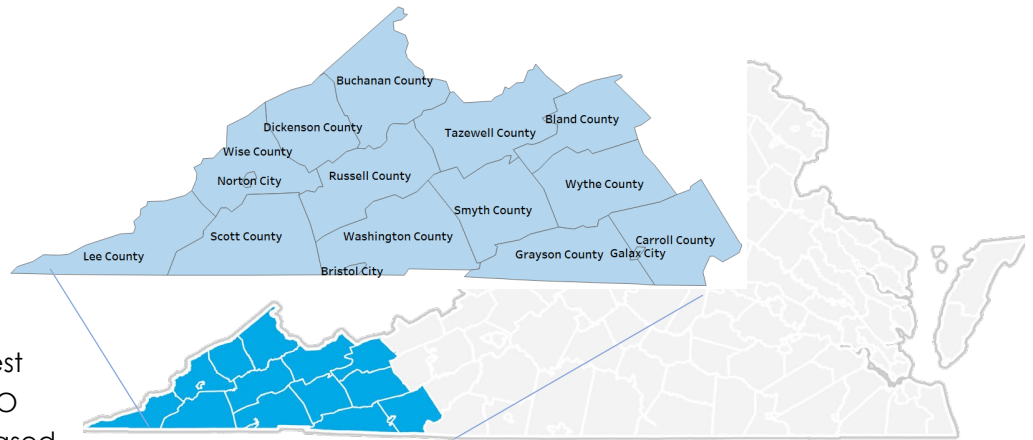
### Entrepreneurship, Small Business & Innovation Subcommittee

**Mission:** The GO Virginia Region 1 Entrepreneurship, Small Business, and Innovation Committee collaborates with community organizations to develop robust resources that enhance the creation and support of small businesses and entrepreneurs. By nurturing innovation and expanding access to opportunity, the committee helps build a dynamic and inclusive economic landscape across Southwest Virginia.

## Region 1 Overview

Region 1, located in the most southwest corner of the Commonwealth, is predominantly rural and has historically experienced slower economic growth compared to other GO Virginia regions in the state.

Region 1 has the second-lowest economic growth of all the GO Virginia regions in the state, based on its 1.4% employment growth in the four quarters ending with the first quarter of 2023. By comparison, employment grew 2.6% in the state and 3.3% in the nation over the same period.



The Appalachian Mountains run through many of the 13 counties and three cities that comprise the region; this includes Counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, and the Cities of Bristol, Galax, and Norton. The beauty and rural amenities of the region also bring the challenges of a sparsely populated area and mountains that can present navigated difficulties to residents seeking jobs. The natural resources of the mountains have historically made coal mining one of the highest-paying industries in the region.

Region 1 is home to an estimated population of 372,503, which is a decrease of 10,133 people since it was recorded in 2021. Projections in JobsEQ estimate the population will contract annually by 0.9% through 2034 - a loss of 33,353 people. This projected population loss has increased from previous reports as county-level population data are revised.

Despite these challenges, this updated Growth and Diversification Plan aims to address these economic disparities by identifying strategic initiatives that promote diversification, foster entrepreneurship, develop talent pipelines aligned with emerging sectors, and enhance regional collaboration. By leveraging available resources effectively and implementing targeted strategies, this plan seeks to create new opportunities for sustainable economic growth within Region 1.

## Highlights of Progress

In recent years, GO Virginia Region 1 has made significant progress in fostering regional collaboration and expanding project participation. Since the GO Virginia program was established, Region 1 has funded a total of [insert number] Per Capita projects amounting to \$[insert total amount]. Additionally, Region 1 has collaborated with Region 3 on two statewide competitive projects.

In 2020, the GO Virginia State Board authorized the use of \$14.66 million in statewide competitive funds to respond to the unprecedented economic conditions facing Virginia due to the immediate and long-term effects of the coronavirus on regional economies. This initiative focused resources on Economic Resilience and Recovery (ERR) while staying true to the GO Virginia mission. At the close of the ERR program in June 2022, Region 1 allocated \$638,927 in ERR funds to five regional projects. Region 1 also served as the lead



region for a Competitive ERR project involving all nine GO Virginia regions that was funded in the amount of \$2,950,000.

Approved by the 2022 General Assembly, House Bill 29 provided \$2.5 million to the GO Virginia State Board for Talent Pathways Initiative planning grants to support analysis of the workforce needs of regional businesses and the identification of the skills and training that can help prepare Virginians to fill available jobs in regional markets. Region 1 selected Advanced Manufacturing as its priority cluster and awarded the full \$250,000 to one project in December 2023, with work conducted throughout 2024.

In September 2024, Southwest Virginia was significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene, which disrupted business operations and strained local economies across Region 1. In response, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) launched the Hurricane Helene Business Relief Initiative, offering targeted grant support to affected businesses in Regions 1, 2, and 3 through the GO Virginia program. Region 1 has seen strong interest and uptake in this initiative, with localities and businesses actively pursuing funding to rebuild, adapt, and strengthen their resilience. This effort underscores GO Virginia's role in not only driving growth, but also supporting recovery and long-term sustainability in the face of economic disruption.

Region 1 has also made notable progress in strengthening its project pipeline. Through consistent outreach, one-on-one engagement with localities, and targeted workgroup meetings, the Council and support organization have raised awareness about GO Virginia funding opportunities and built trust across the region. These efforts have resulted in a robust and diverse pipeline of planning and implementation grant concepts, many of which are grounded in local priorities and poised for meaningful impact. The response from stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive, and Region 1 is well-positioned to advance projects that reflect both innovation and collaboration.

These investments and activities have laid a solid foundation for future initiatives within Region 1. The commitment to regional collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and active project development sets a positive trajectory for continued growth and diversification in the region's economy.

For more detailed information on funded projects within Region 1 during this period, please refer to the Region 1 Projects Overview section and Appendix 4 – Region 1 Approved Projects.

## **Regional Collaboration**

GO Virginia Region 1 continues to make meaningful progress in advancing one of the program's core priorities: incentivizing collaboration across jurisdictions. Since the establishment of the Region 1 Council and the third edition of the Growth and Diversification Plan, five Regional Industrial Facility Authorities (RIFAs) have been formed—each representing a significant step toward shared investment and regional economic alignment. These RIFAs include:

1. Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (serving Carroll County, Grayson County, and the City of Galax)
2. Cumberland Industrial Facilities Authority (serving Buchanan County, Dickenson County, Tazewell County, and Russell County)
3. Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (serving Dickenson County, Lee County, Scott County, Wise County, and the City of Norton)
4. Pathway Regional Industrial Facility Authority (serving Bland County, Smyth County, and Washington County)
5. Smyth-Washington Industrial Facilities Authority (serving Smyth County and Washington County)

Prior to GO Virginia's launch in Region 1, only two RIFAs—BRCEDA and SWIFA—were in existence. The formation of three additional RIFAs since then reflects a deliberate and coordinated effort to expand regional cooperation, unlock revenue-sharing opportunities, and position localities for joint site development and infrastructure investment.

These RIFAs serve as foundational platforms for cross-jurisdictional collaboration, enabling member localities to pool resources, align priorities, and pursue economic development strategies that transcend individual boundaries.

As Region 1 continues to build its project pipeline and strengthen stakeholder engagement, the RIFAs remain a critical mechanism for scaling impact and maximizing shared benefits. Their presence reinforces the region's commitment to working together—across county lines and community sectors—to drive sustainable growth and long-term resilience.

## **Regional Participation**

GO Virginia Region 1 continues to demonstrate exceptional regional engagement and collaboration. As of 2025, all thirteen counties and three independent cities within Region 1 have been impacted by at least one approved GO Virginia project. Moreover, 100% of these localities have actively participated in planning or implementation efforts, underscoring a shared commitment to economic development and inclusive growth. This level of participation reflects the strength of Region 1's collaborative culture and ensures that every community has a voice—and a stake—in shaping the region's future.

A cornerstone of this engagement strategy is the activation of three dedicated GO Virginia Region 1 Workgroups, based on the sub-committees of the GO Virginia Region 1 Council:

- Talent Development
- Economic Development and Infrastructure
- Small Business and Innovation

These workgroups convene regularly and serve as dynamic platforms for cross-sector collaboration. They bring together local government leaders, economic developers, educators, workforce professionals, and industry stakeholders to identify priorities, share insights, and co-develop project concepts. The workgroups have played a vital role in strengthening the Region 1 project pipeline, aligning investments with regional needs, and fostering a sense of shared ownership across jurisdictions.

In summer 2025, Region 1 hosted its first-ever Council Retreat, bringing together Council members for a day of strategic reflection, team building, and goal setting. The retreat provided a valuable space for members to reaffirm their commitment to the GO Virginia mission, review progress, and establish priorities for the coming year. It also reinforced the importance of transparent leadership and collaborative decision-making in guiding Region 1's economic future.

Region 1 also proudly served as a sponsor of the Southwest Virginia Economic Forum at UVA Wise—an annual convening that unites stakeholders from across the region to align on economic development priorities. The 2025 forum was a powerful demonstration of Region 1's leadership in fostering regional dialogue, elevating shared challenges, and celebrating local successes. It continues to serve as a catalyst for new partnerships and a platform for amplifying the region's collective voice.

Together, these efforts reflect Region 1's deep commitment to regional participation—not just in name, but in practice. Through consistent engagement, structured collaboration, and inclusive programming, Region 1 is building a resilient and responsive ecosystem that empowers every locality to contribute to and benefit from the region's economic transformation.

## Targeted Industries & Strategies

Since the launch of the GO Virginia Region 1 Growth and Diversification Plan in 2017, the Council has consistently identified industry sectors with the greatest potential to create higher-wage employment and drive regional economic transformation. The 2025 plan reaffirms five targeted industries that remain central to Region 1's strategy:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agriculture / Food and Beverage Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Energy and Minerals
- Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing

Priority Industry Cluster	Industries	Year Added to G&D Plan
<b>Advanced Manufacturing</b>	Chemical Products Automotive & Transportation Equipment Electrical Equipment & Components Plastics & Rubber Products	<b>2017</b>
<b>Agriculture/Food &amp; Beverage Manufacturing</b>	Meat Processing Beverage Food Processing	<b>2017</b>
<b>Information Technology</b>	Computer Systems & Software Design Cybersecurity Data Centers/Telecommunications/Analytics	<b>2017</b>
<b>Energy &amp; Minerals</b>	Energy Storage Alternative Energy	<b>2017</b>
<b>Logistics, Transportation &amp; Warehousing</b>	Transportation Warehousing	<b>2023</b>

These sectors were selected based on their historical significance, current momentum, and future growth potential. The addition of Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing in 2023 was a strategic response to emerging data from Chmura Economics & Analytics, which highlighted the region's geographic advantages and the potential for inland port development. This expanded focus positions Region 1 to capitalize on its proximity to major transportation corridors and neighboring states, transforming the region into a hub for efficient trade and distribution.

While tourism continues to be a vital contributor to Southwest Virginia's economy—driven by its natural beauty, cultural assets, and outdoor recreation infrastructure—it is not included as a GO Virginia targeted industry due to its relatively low average wages. However, Region 1 recognizes the sector's role in placemaking, talent attraction, and quality of life, and supports complementary initiatives that enhance tourism-related amenities and services.

Similarly, healthcare has not been designated as a targeted industry cluster, as its growth is typically tied to population trends rather than proactive economic development. However, in response to regional workforce shortages and stakeholder feedback, healthcare has been elevated as a strategic workforce development priority within the Talent Development framework. Region 1 is committed to strengthening pipelines in nursing, allied health, and behavioral health to support both community well-being and economic resilience.

GO Virginia Region 1's foundational strategies remain aligned with statewide goals and continue to guide investment across the region. These strategies include:

- Talent Development
- Sites and Infrastructure
- Innovation and Scale-Up Support

Together, these pillars underpin all targeted industries and provide a practical yet aspirational roadmap for stakeholders. They reflect Region 1's commitment to building a diversified economy through collaborative planning, strategic investment, and inclusive growth.

The following charts provide an overview of these priority strategies within Region 1.

Talent Development
<b>Strategy 1:</b> Align education and training programs with needs and expectations of target industries; strengthen communication between educational providers and target industries; support the Talent Pathways Initiative focusing on Advanced Manufacturing and advance implementation strategies
<b>Strategy 2:</b> Build a strong pipeline of participants for programs (certifications, associates, bachelors and above) valued by the target market employers; promote career pathways to increase awareness of occupational, educational, and workforce opportunities available in the region
<b>Strategy 3:</b> Expand work-based learning experiences including internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job upskilling, and re-skilling programs
<b>Strategy 4:</b> Increase attainment of industry-recognized certifications, credentials, and degrees aligned with Region 1's target industries
<b>Strategy 5:</b> Elevate healthcare as a strategic workforce priority to strengthen pipelines in nursing, allied health, behavioral health, and related fields

Sites and Infrastructure
<b>Strategy 1:</b> Advance certification and tier ranking of existing and new sites for targeted industries. Fully leverage VEDP's Site Characterization and the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) to prioritize high-impact investments
<b>Strategy 2:</b> Support broadband infrastructure expansion to ensure competitiveness and enable innovation across industrial and technology sites
<b>Strategy 3:</b> Strengthen and utilize Regional Industrial Facility Authorities (RIFAs) to develop larger, shared industrial sites that attract target industries and enable regional revenue-sharing opportunities

## Innovation and Scale Up Support

**Strategy 1:** Advance implementation of Opportunity SWVA as the region's coordinating entity for entrepreneurship. Focus on high-growth company development, ecosystem connectivity, and capital access

**Strategy 2:** Expand innovation and entrepreneurship programming across all levels of the educational infrastructure, including K–12, postsecondary, and workforce development

**Strategy 3:** Support entrepreneurs and existing businesses in target industries through product and market development, access to capital, and mentorship networks

# INTRODUCTION: PULLING THE LEVERS OF REGIONAL RENEWAL

Since its inception in 2015, the GO Virginia Region 1 Council has been steadily pulling the levers to help with economic transformation across Southwest Virginia. With strategic investments in five key industry clusters—advanced manufacturing, agriculture and food/beverage manufacturing, information technology, energy and minerals, and logistics, transportation, and warehousing—Region 1 has laid the foundation for a more resilient and diversified economy. These sectors were chosen not only for their growth potential but for their ability to generate higher-wage employment and attract new talent to the region. The results are tangible: new business expansions, stronger talent pipelines, and a growing sense of regional momentum.

However, revitalization is not driven solely by industry. The GO Virginia Region 1 Council has recognized that economic growth depends on more than just job creation—it requires the infrastructure of daily life to be strong and accessible. That's why Southwest Virginia has made investments in childcare and housing. These are not peripheral concerns; they are essential levers in the machinery of economic development. Affordable, quality childcare enables more parents to enter the workforce. Safe, attainable housing attracts and retains talent. Together, these investments help ensure that economic opportunities are not only created but also sustained.

Another critical lever has been healthcare, not only as a service sector but as a workforce development strategy. By aligning healthcare training programs with regional employment needs, Region 1 is addressing both a labor shortage and a public health imperative. This dual-purpose approach strengthens the region's healthcare infrastructure while opening new career pathways for residents. It's a model of how workforce development can be both responsive and regenerative.

Yet even the most well-calibrated machinery can be disrupted by forces beyond its control. Over the past year, shifts in federal funding priorities have introduced new challenges. Some programs that once supported economic revitalization have been scaled back or redirected, creating uncertainty for rural regions like ours. While GO Virginia remains a vital tool, the need for stable, long-term investment—especially in infrastructure, broadband, and workforce training—has never been more urgent. The Region 1 Council remains committed to navigating these headwinds with transparency, collaboration, and a clear-eyed focus on what works.



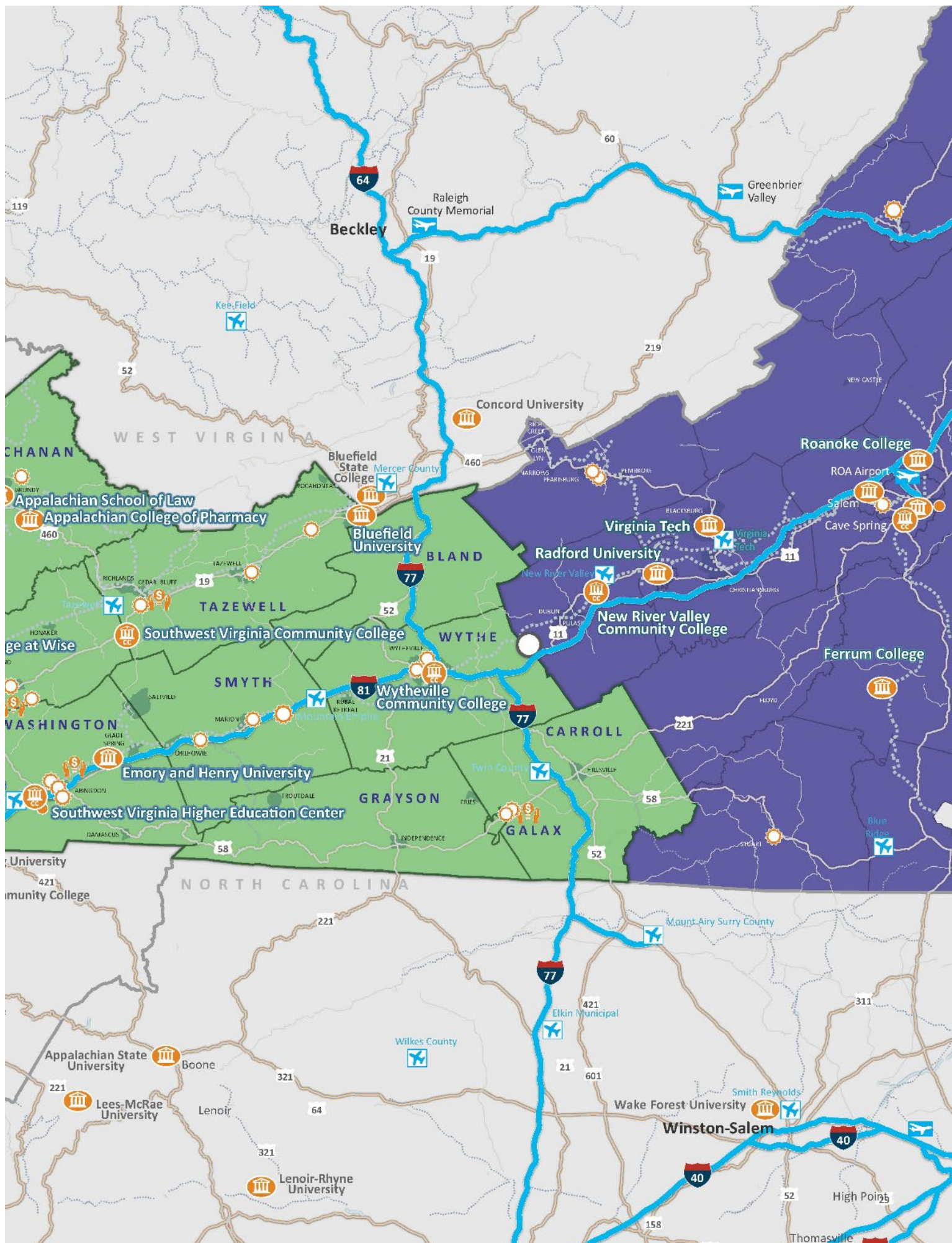


**LEGEND**

- Colleges and Universities
- Community College
- Other Education Asset
- Workforce Center
- Incubators/Accelerators Coworking Spaces
- U.S. Interstate
- U.S. Highway
- Railroad
- Commercial Airport
- General Aviation Airport
- Foreign Trade Zone



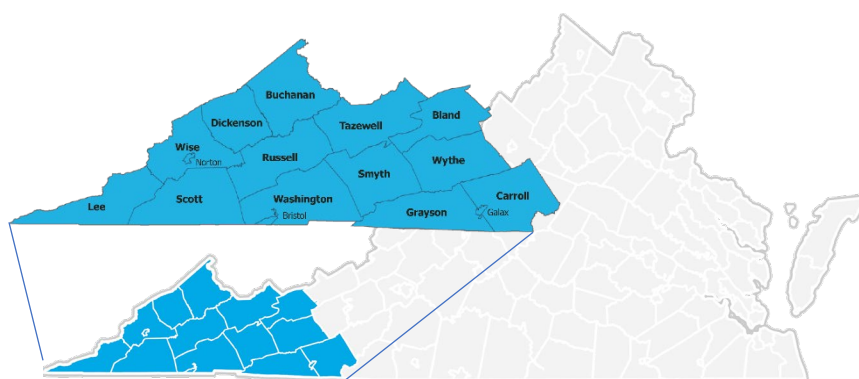




# SWVA BY THE NUMBERS

GO Virginia Region 1 contracted Chmura Economics and Analytics to conduct a thorough analysis of the region's economic and workforce data. Chmura's analysis is an update to the baseline metrics from the first quarter of 2023, reported in the 2024 Growth and Diversification Plan. The report analyzes the demographic trends, economic landscape, growth of key employment sectors, and gaps in occupations and skills critical to economic growth in GO Virginia Region 1 and its labor shed. This section includes an overview of the Region 1 economic and workforce data and the changes in data since the 2024 Growth and Diversification Plan, as well as an explanation of the labor shed.

## Region 1 Background and Labor Shed



GO Virginia Region 1 is located in the most southwest corner of the state, and is mainly a rural region. Region 1 recorded 0.3% employment growth over the four quarters ending Q1 2025, ranking second-to-last among all GO Virginia regions. By comparison, employment grew 1.3% in the state and 1.0% in the nation over the same period.

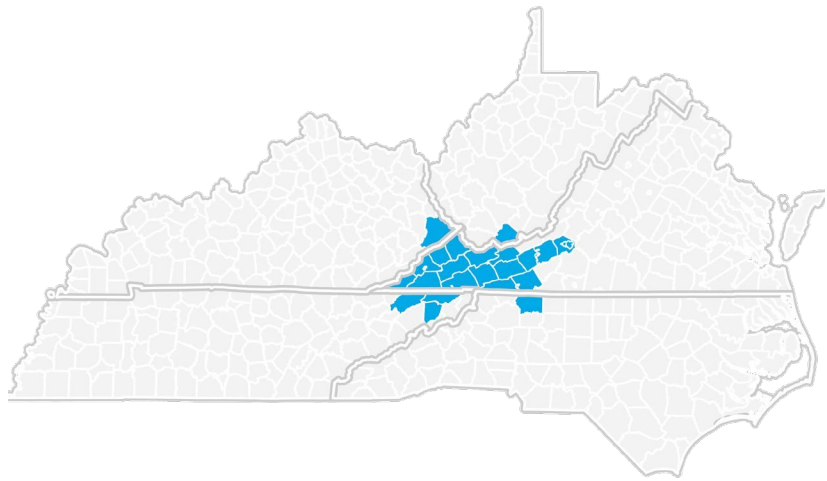
The Appalachian Mountains run through many of the 13 counties and three cities that comprise Region 1. The mountains offer beautiful views and rural amenities, but they also present challenges such as a sparse population and an area that is often difficult to navigate. This complicates the relationship between residents and jobs.

The residents of GO Virginia Region 1 can benefit from job opportunities in the four states bordering the region. From an economic development perspective, the adjoining counties are home to firms that Region 1 can capitalize as cluster and supply chain assets. For example, EASTMAN Chemical Company and Domtar paper mill in Kingsport, Tennessee (Sullivan County) can be highlighted with prospect firms that are considering locating in the southwest portion of GO Virginia Region 1. Likewise, Pike County, Kentucky, should be included in discussions with prospects of energy-related businesses.

As shown in the accompanying map, commuting patterns indicate that three counties in Tennessee, and one each in Kentucky, West Virginia, and North Carolina have enough driving in and out of Region 1 to warrant inclusion in the GO Virginia Region 1 labor shed. The presence of Interstate 81, Interstate 26, and Highway 23 running through the region also provides easy access for some residents to commute. Consequently, the GO Virginia Region 1 labor shed includes six additional Virginia localities. Including Virginia and other states, the twelve additional localities are:



- City of Roanoke, Virginia
- City of Salem, Virginia
- Hawkins County, Tennessee
- Mercer County, West Virginia
- Montgomery County, Virginia
- Pike County, Kentucky
- Pulaski County, Virginia
- Radford City, Virginia
- Roanoke County, Virginia
- Sullivan County, Tennessee
- Surry County, North Carolina
- Washington County, Tennessee



The labor shed was defined by including localities with at least 600 commuters traveling to or from the Go Virginia Region 1; the City of Salem was also included due to its central location, even if it did not meet this criterion, because it is located within Roanoke County, which met the threshold.

Employment in the Region 1 labor shed fared slightly better than employment in Region 1 in the last year, growing 0.5% over the four quarters ending with the first quarter of 2025.

Commuting patterns within the labor shed reveal which occupations draw most workers into Region 1, and which workers are commuting out of the region. The largest net loss is for office and administrative support occupations—such as customer service representatives, file clerks, and data entry keyers. This is followed by transportation and material moving occupations and then by production occupations, which are primarily found in the manufacturing industry. Also, more than 1,000 workers in five other major occupation groups leave the region for work each day, including workers in healthcare practitioners and technical occupations. GO Virginia Region 1 also attracts workers, with the greatest numbers of net positive commuters in educational instruction and library occupations; community and social service occupations, and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations.

GO Virginia Region 1: Commuting Patterns In and Out				
SOC	Occupation	Commute In	Commute Out	Net Commute
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	1812	1136	676
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	802	357	445
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	544	298	246
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	1581	1411	170
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	288	184	104
11-0000	Management Occupations	2011	1928	84
23-0000	Legal Occupations	137	93	44
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	739	739	0
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	452	494	-43
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	66	125	-59
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	724	799	-75

GO Virginia Region 1: Commuting Patterns In and Out				
SOC	Occupation	Commute In	Commute Out	Net Commute
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	495	784	-289
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	1305	2102	-797
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	2136	3124	-988
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	457	1488	-1030
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	770	1885	-1115
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	700	2293	-1593
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	1662	3342	-1680
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	599	2388	-1788
51-0000	Production Occupations	1233	3281	-2048
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	1661	4094	-2432
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	1971	4688	-2717

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#), U.S. Census Bureau

## Economic and Workforce Data Analysis 2025 Overview

Employment in GO Virginia Region 1 grew to 134,037 as of 2025Q1—marking 16 straight quarters of employment growth. However, this is still down from an employment level of 136,280 in 2020Q1, prior to the pandemic-induced recession. **The region's average annual wage by industry has increased over the past two years to \$46,125.** The region's population decreased to 368,369 as of 2023, and projections estimate the population will contract annually by 0.3% on average from 2025 through 2035. As of 2023 (the latest data available), the labor force participation rate declined slightly to 48.2% in GO Virginia Region 1 and remained flat at 54.2% in the Region 1 labor shed, compared to 63.3% in the nation. The seasonally-adjusted monthly unemployment rate stands at 4.4% in the region as of May 2025 compared with 4.2% in the nation. Per capita income increased to \$29,798 in the region and \$33,290 in the labor shed compared to \$43,289 in the nation. Poverty level decreased to 17.7% in the region, but it remains higher than in the labor shed (17.2%) and in the nation (12.4%). The number of post-secondary degrees awarded in the labor shed also increased by over 500 since the 2024 report.

Region 1 Economic & Workforce Data 2025			
	2023 Q1	2025 Q1	Change
Population*	372,503	368,369	-4,134
Employment	132,813 (Q1 2023)	134,037 (Q1 2025)	+1,224
Unemployment Rate	3.5% (July 2023)	4.4% (May 2025)	+0.9%
Average Annual Wage	\$42,517	\$46,125	+\$3,608
Per Capita Income*	\$25,436	\$29,798	+\$4,362
Labor Force Participation Rate*	49.1%	48.2%	-0.9%
Poverty Level*	17.9%	17.7%	-0.2%
Post-secondary Degree Awards (Labor Shed)**	27,682	28,194	+512

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ®

\*5-year ACS Data, 2017-2021 and 2019-2023. \*\*NCES Data, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 academic years.

Employment in GO Virginia Region 1 has been steadily declining since the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009. Manufacturing, an important driver in the region, was already declining before the Great Recession—following a nation-wide trend. However, contrary to the trend of manufacturing employment in the state of Virginia, Region 1 manufacturing employment has continued to contract after 2010, albeit at a slower pace. Employment in the energy cluster, another important driver in the region (particularly coal mining) has lost nearly 4,000 jobs since 2012.

In GO Virginia Region 1, both the manufacturing sector and the energy cluster pay a higher average wage than the average for all industries in the region. Therefore, displaced workers from these sectors are unlikely to find alternative employment in the region that pays comparable wages. The result is that many have left the region, leading to population and labor force declines as well as the loss of talent and skills. The region's average annual wage by industry has increased to \$46,125 in 2025.

According to the Census Bureau, a total of 368,369 people live in GO Virginia Region 1 as of 2023, and the population has suffered an annual average decrease of 0.8% since 2013. Looking ahead, **projections in JobsEQ anticipate the region will continue to contract an annual average rate of 0.3% per year between 2025 and 2035—a loss of over 10,000 people.** This projected population loss represents a deceleration from the previous trend. Ongoing efforts in GO Virginia Region 1 to attract and retain population may also alter this projection.

The larger GO Virginia Region 1 labor shed was home to 1.28 million people in 2023, with an average annual population decrease of -0.2% since 2013. Population in the labor shed is projected to increase an average annual rate of 0.06% per year between 2025 and 2035, for an addition of over 6,000 residents. Population growth in the state of Virginia and the nation are both expected to increase an annual average of 0.4% over the same period.



The age distribution in Region 1 is skewed toward a lower percentage of younger individuals when compared to the region's labor shed. To some extent, this is due to the presence of Virginia Tech, East Tennessee State University, Radford University, and other schools in the labor shed, but also presumably because some of the younger residents leave the region for better job opportunities. In Region 1, 18.5% of the population is between 18 and 34 years old, compared with 22.2% in the labor shed and 22.8% in the state. In contrast, 23.3% of the population in Region 1 is aged 65 and older, compared with 20.6% in the labor shed and 16.3% in Virginia.

The labor force participation rate in Region 1 is relatively low when compared to the state. This is in part because job opportunities are not as plentiful as in other GO regions, but also because a higher percentage of the population has disabilities, and individuals with disabilities are less likely to work. The labor force participation rate of the civilian population (age 16 and older) in Region 1 was 48.2% between 2019 and 2023, compared with 54.2% in the labor shed and 65.0% in the state.

The percentage of the population aged 18-64 with a disability in Region 1 is more than double that of the state. Additionally, only 32.1% of individuals with disabilities in Region 1 participate in the labor force, compared to 49.1% in the state.

Demographic Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	GO VA Region 1	Region 1 Labor Shed	Virginia	GO VA Region 1	Region 1 Labor Shed	Virginia
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population age 16 and older)	48.2%	54.2%	65.0%	148,507	576,057	4,450,159
Armed Forces Labor Force	0.0%	0.1%	1.9%	118	1,388	130,751
Veterans (age 18-64)	4.5%	4.6%	7.5%	9,637	35,223	392,878
Mean Commute Time (minutes)	-	-	-	25.2	22.7	27.6
Commute via Public Transportation	0.2%	0.7%	2.6%	306	3,638	112,219
Union Membership <sup>1</sup>	4.8%	4.6%	4.6%	-	-	-
Social						
Disconnected Youth <sup>2</sup>	8.2%	3.2%	1.8%	1,301	2,169	8,401
Children in Single-Parent Families (% of all children)	36.3%	36.4%	31.3%	22,201	81,989	561,755
With a Disability, Age 18-64	22.0%	16.6%	10.0%	44,992	125,469	513,773

<sup>1</sup> Data is from the current American Community Survey Population Estimates, the Union Membership and Coverage Database (<https://unionstats.com>), and Chmura. County-level and ZIP code-level data are the best estimates based upon industry-level, MSA-level, and state-level data. Union membership rates are currently updated through 202.

<sup>2</sup> Individuals between the ages of 16 and 19 who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

Demographic Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	GO VA Region 1	Region 1 Labor Shed	Virginia	GO VA Region 1	Region 1 Labor Shed	Virginia
<b>With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size</b>	32.1%	35.2%	49.1%	14,432	44,203	252,183
<b>Foreign Born</b>	1.2%	3.3%	12.9%	4,485	42,372	1,120,207
<b>Speak English Less Than Very Well (population age 5 years and older)</b>	0.7%	1.6%	6.1%	2,563	19,177	501,183

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#), ACS 2019-2023 unless noted otherwise

There are significant differences within the target industries in the percentage of people earning above-average wages. For example, about 66% of workers in food and beverage manufacturing are employed in occupations that pay wages above the regional average, compared with about 98% of workers in the energy cluster. These baseline measures are summarized in the table below.

Target Industry Wages for Four Quarters Ending 2025Q1			
Cluster	Wages	Employment	Percent of Employment Paying Above- Average Wages
<b>Logistics, Warehousing, and Transportation</b>	\$55,901	4,084	54%
<b>Advanced Manufacturing</b>	\$57,051	16,444	57%
<b>Food and Beverage Manufacturing<sup>3</sup></b>	\$57,734	1,401	66%
<b>Energy &amp; Minerals</b>	\$95,556	3,813	98%
<b>Information Technology</b>	\$98,200	2,347	100%

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#)

The three cities and 13 counties in Region 1 vary in size of employment and wage levels. Buchanan County has the highest average annual wage (\$61,418) in the region, mostly due to its high concentration of mining. The lowest reported average annual wage is \$35,873 in Grayson County.

<sup>3</sup> Note that Food and Beverage Manufacturing is a subset of the Advanced Manufacturing cluster; these clusters are not exclusive of one another.

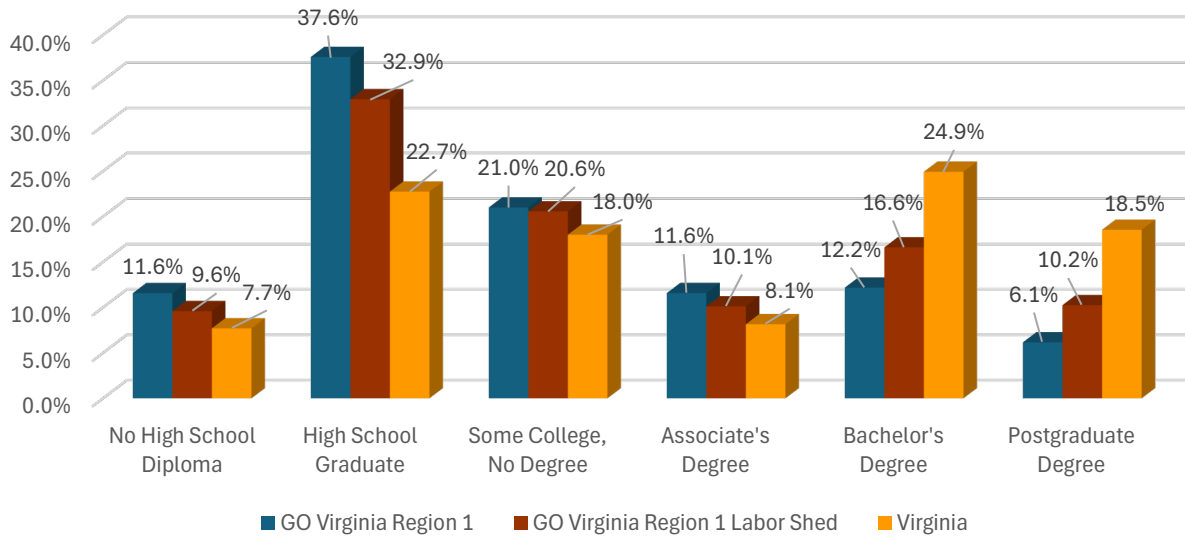
GO VA Region 1 Locality Employment and Wages for Four Quarters Ending 2025Q1		
Locality	Employment	Average Annual Wages
Bland County	2,219	\$55,209
Buchanan County	6,374	\$61,418
Carroll County	6,869	\$39,535
Dickenson County	3,564	\$52,261
Grayson County	4,037	\$35,873
Lee County	4,923	\$42,297
Russell County	6,895	\$46,510
Scott County	5,794	\$41,498
Smyth County	12,414	\$47,450
Tazewell County	14,751	\$44,034
Washington County	22,616	\$47,209
Wise County	11,712	\$46,598
Wythe County	12,630	\$45,645
Bristol City	11,013	\$46,925
Galax City	5,896	\$41,556
Norton City	3,129	\$45,814

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#)

## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in GO Virginia Region 1 is lagging behind both the labor shed and state. In the region, 11.6% of the population does not have a high school diploma, compared with 9.6% in the labor shed and 7.7% in the state. Similarly, a high school diploma is the highest educational attainment level for 37.6% of Region 1's residents compared with 32.9% in the labor shed and 22.7% in Virginia. At the other end of the spectrum, only 12.2% of Region 1 residents possess a bachelor's degree and another 6.1% have postgraduate degrees. This is compared with 16.6% and 10.2%, respectively, in the labor shed and 24.9% and 18.5%, respectively, in the state. On a positive note, Region 1 has a higher proportion of its population reporting an associate degree as their highest educational attainment (at 11.6%) than the labor shed (10.1%) and state (8.1%).

## Educational Attainment, Population Aged 25-64 2019-2023



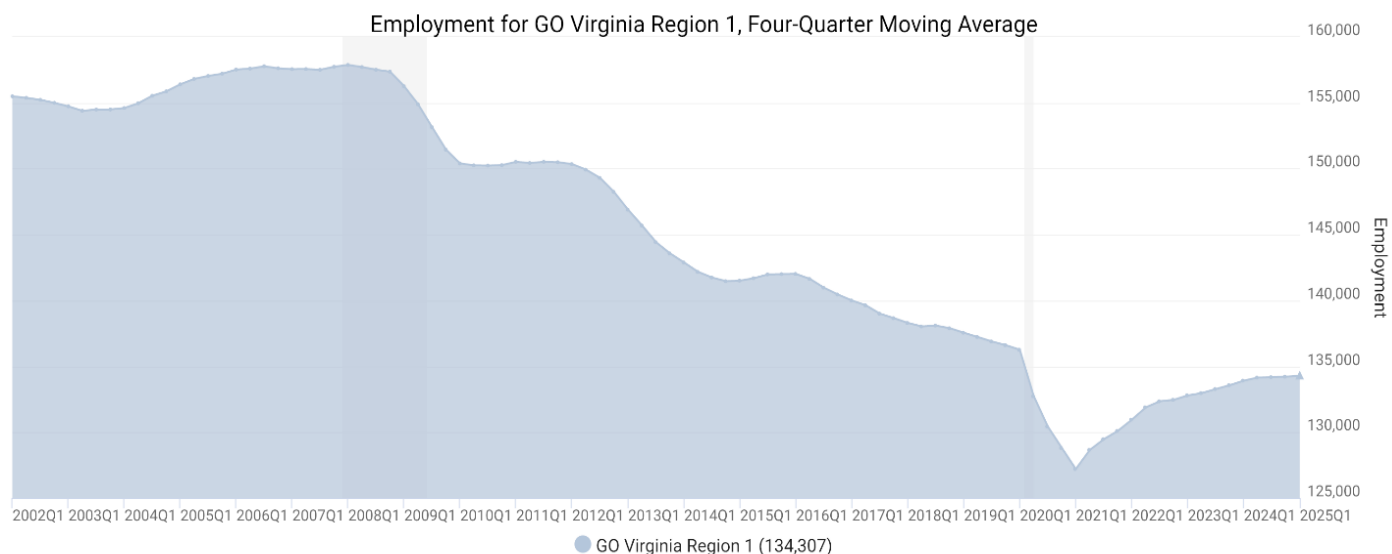
GO Virginia Region 1 has made positive progress since the 2024 update in terms of educational attainment, as the percentage of the population with no high school diploma decreased by 1.7 percentage points. This was the most significant decrease among the nine GO Virginia regions from 2021 to 2023. The percentage of the population with an associate degree and a bachelor's degree increased by 0.1 percentage points and 0.7 percentage points, respectively. While a positive percentage change (+0.2 percentage points) signaled an improvement among the population possessing a bachelor's degree or higher, Region 1 fared better than only one other region between 2021 and 2023 in that category.

Educational Attainment by GO Virginia Region									
	No High School Diploma			Associate Degree			Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
	2021	2023	Change	2021	2023	Change	2021	2023	Change
<b>Region 1</b>	13.3%	11.6%	-1.7	11.5%	11.6%	0.1	17.6%	18.3%	0.7
<b>Region 2</b>	7.3%	6.6%	-0.7	10.1%	9.3%	-0.8	31.8%	32.9%	1.1
<b>Region 3</b>	13.1%	12.4%	-0.7	11.0%	10.9%	-0.1	17.5%	17.9%	0.4
<b>Region 4</b>	8.2%	7.4%	-0.8	7.9%	8.1%	0.2	40.7%	42.0%	1.3
<b>Region 5</b>	6.7%	6.6%	-0.1	10.9%	10.5%	-0.4	34.6%	36.0%	1.4
<b>Region 6</b>	8.0%	8.3%	0.3	8.6%	8.4%	-0.2	34.4%	35.7%	1.3
<b>Region 7</b>	7.0%	7.0%	0.0	6.0%	5.7%	-0.3	61.9%	63.0%	1.1
<b>Region 8</b>	10.9%	10.4%	-0.5	8.1%	7.9%	-0.2	26.8%	28.3%	1.5
<b>Region 9</b>	7.8%	7.8%	0.0	7.5%	7.1%	-0.4	40.5%	42.2%	1.7

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ®, ACS 2019-2023

## Employment

Employment in Region 1 has been declining since the Great Recession. Between 2010 and 2019, employment in the region declined 9.1%, to 136,621 workers. In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all aspects of the global economy, employment in Region 1 declined sharply. Overall employment bottomed out in the second quarter of 2020 at 123,120 workers and rebounded afterward. Employment in Region 1 currently sits at 134,307 workers as of the first quarter of 2025. While the region has regained most of the jobs lost during the pandemic, it is still over 2,000 jobs below pre-pandemic levels.



GO Virginia Region 1 has been slower at recovering from the COVID recession. In the second quarter of 2020, employment fell 10.0% from a year earlier in the region compared with losses of 10.2% in the labor shed and 9.6% in the state over the same period. Employment began to recover in GO Virginia Region 1 in 2021. Growth has slowed down in recent quarters, but remained expansionary, and in the four quarters ending with the first quarter of 2025, employment was up 0.3% from a year earlier in the region and up 0.5% in the labor shed, while the state exhibited 1.3% growth over the same period.

Employment in the labor shed has fared better than in Region 1. Although employment in the Region 1 labor shed remains below its previous peak level prior to the Great Recession, it has completely recovered from the pandemic, and it now sits 0.8% above the first quarter of 2020. This suggests that the counties in the states around Region 1 have experienced greater job gains. Overall, the labor shed showed more resilience during the pandemic, as evidenced by a lower rate of contraction in employment. But also, a faster recovery post-pandemic.

Since the start of the GO Virginia initiative in Spring 2017, there have been multiple significant announcements of projects in the region. Below are highlights of notable announcements since 2021.

- In September 2021, EarthLink (a major internet supplier) announced a \$5.4 million investment into establishing a customer service support center in Norton that is projected to create 285 jobs.

- In June 2022 it was announced that Scholle IPN, a leading supplier of flexible packaging solutions, would be investing \$31.1 million into an expansion of its operations in Smyth County—creating 75 new jobs in the process.
- FedEx announced a new distribution center in July 2022 that will be located in Washington County and is predicted to create 250 jobs.
- Coronado Global Resources announced in August 2022 that it would be expanding metallurgical coal production operations in Buchanan and Tazewell counties, adding 181 jobs and \$169.1 million in investment.
- In March 2023, water bottle producer Wilderness Mountain Water Company announced plans to invest \$17.15 million into its existing operations in Bland County and to create 55 new jobs.
- Tate (a flooring manufacturer) announced in November of 2023 the establishment of a new production plant, focused on the manufacturing of data center components, with a \$15 million investment to create 170 new jobs.
- In October 2024, Electro-Mechanical LLC, which manufactures electrical equipment, announced an expansion of operations, creating over 109 new jobs with a \$17 million investment.
- In October 2024, Wrap Technologies Inc. announced a relocation of its manufacturing and distribution facility to the GO Virginia One region, citing strategic location and state investments, creating 126 new jobs and \$4 million investment.
- A \$105 investment into a low-carbon greenhouse for indoor grown tomatoes was announced in February 2025 by OastHouse Ventures, Ltd, creating 118 new jobs.

The labor shed has seen significant announcements in recent years as well. Roanoke County has had five major announcements since February 2022 for a total of 1,315 new jobs, including a Wells Fargo customer service center that will create 1,100 jobs and includes a \$87 million investment. In 2023, Salem made six announcements, totaling 299 new jobs and \$111 million in investment. The most significant of these was the STS Group AG, a German manufacturer for the automobile and trucking industries, which established its American headquarters in the former General Electric building in the City of Salem and added 119 new jobs. The decision was a pivot from previous plans to establish the headquarters in Wythe County. A medical manufacturing company announced in April 2025 an expansion of its operations in Salem, investing \$56 million and leading to the creation of 83 new jobs.

There have been several business closings resulting in lost jobs in Region 1. The following nine closures reported by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership combine for a loss of 1,302 jobs in the region:

- Speyside Bourbon Cooperage closed in February 2025, eliminating 75 jobs in Smyth County.
- Parkdale, Inc. closed in October 2023, eliminating 76 jobs in Carroll County
- Serco, Inc. in Dickenson County closed in March 2022, eliminating 20 jobs
- Komatsu Mining Corp. in Tazewell County closed in March 2021, eliminating 128 jobs
- Utility Trailer Manufacturing Co. closed in June 2020, eliminating 326 jobs in Washington County
- Sykes Enterprises laid off 197 Buchanan County workers in September 2019
- Bristol Compressors International closed in September 2018, eliminating 470 jobs in Washington County
- Coca-Cola Bottling Co. closed a facility in Bristol, eliminating ten jobs in October 2018
- Titan Wheel Corp. in Smyth County closed in December 2017, eliminating 40 jobs



## Targeted Industry Sectors

Region 1's target industries remain poised for future growth. In the first quarter of 2025, the average annual wage for advanced manufacturing was \$57,051. This sector employed 16,444 people. The logistics, transportation, and warehousing sector employed 4,084 workers at an annual average wage of \$55,901. The energy sector employed 3,813 workers and paid an average annual wage of \$95,556. The latter was boosted by the high wages in coal mining. Wages in the coal industry have grown steadily over time, from \$97,864 in 2023Q1 to \$104,760 in 2025Q1. The information technology sector employs 2,347 workers in the region and pays an average annual wage of \$98,200. Food and beverage manufacturing employs 1,401 workers and paid an average annual wage of \$57,734.

Target Industries Employment and Wages		
Target Sectors	Employment	Average Annual Wage
Advanced Manufacturing	16,444	\$57,051
Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing	4,084	\$55,901
Energy & Minerals	3,813	\$95,556
Information Technology	2,347	\$98,200
Food and Beverage Manufacturing	1,401	\$57,734

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#), 2025Q1

While each target sector in Region 1 pays above the region's average wages, they often lag behind the levels in other GO Virginia regions. For example, advanced manufacturing and information technology pay a lower average wage than all other regions. The logistics, transportation, and warehousing industry paid an average annual wage higher than Regions 2, 3, and 6 but a lower wage than Regions 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9. Wages in the energy sector are higher in Region 1 compared to Regions 2, 3, 6, and 8, but lower than Regions 4, 5, 7, and 9. Food and beverage manufacturing pays a lower average annual wage than Regions 2 and 4, and a higher average wage than Regions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Target Industry Wages in All GO Virginia Regions						
	All Industries	Advanced Manufacturing	Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing	Energy	Information Technology	Food and Beverage Manufacturing
<b>Region 1</b>	<b>\$46,125</b>	<b>\$57,051</b>	<b>\$55,901</b>	<b>\$95,556</b>	<b>\$98,200</b>	<b>\$57,734</b>
Region 2	\$56,417	\$71,450	\$55,839	\$89,047	\$98,900	\$59,131
Region 3	\$47,380	\$60,956	\$49,427	\$94,083	\$100,000	\$45,401
Region 4	\$69,137	\$79,107	\$59,763	\$146,608	\$114,800	\$67,416
Region 5	\$61,466	\$76,963	\$58,920	\$109,512	\$111,500	\$54,576
Region 6	\$59,494	\$63,510	\$55,188	\$85,018	\$114,600	\$41,625
Region 7	\$99,707	\$97,870	\$87,516	\$178,902	\$139,900	\$35,613
Region 8	\$55,103	\$67,396	\$57,009	\$91,318	\$102,800	\$56,027
Region 9	\$65,149	\$66,347	\$75,085	\$116,913	\$115,000	\$37,085

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#), 2025Q1

Labor market outcomes for the five target industries show mixed trends since the last Growth and Diversification report. The following table shows the changes in employment and average annual wages in the key target industries: advanced manufacturing, logistics, transportation, and warehousing, energy and minerals, information technology, and food and beverage manufacturing. While wages increased across the board over the past two years, employment rose only in the energy sector and in the logistics, transportation, and warehousing sector, and remained flat in information technology. Sector employment has declined in the two manufacturing sectors.

Region 1 Wage and Employment since the Last Report				
	Average Annual Wages		Employment	
	2023Q1	2025Q1	2023Q1	2025Q1
Advanced Manufacturing	\$51,993	\$57,051	16,787	16,444
Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing	\$54,228	\$55,901	3,775	4,084
Energy	\$88,979	\$95,556	3,687	3,813
Information Technology	\$87,800	\$98,200	2,343	2,347
Food and Beverage Manufacturing	\$51,734	\$57,734	1,466	1,401

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#), 2025Q1

## Occupational Demand

This section details immediate needs and potential gaps in occupations and skills to support employment growth in GO Virginia Region 1. Current demand is based on Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) gathered and analyzed by Chmura from online job postings active in the twelve-month period ending at the start of the third quarter 2025. Long-term needs and gaps are based on talent pipelines and future occupational needs.

### Current Demand

Job openings identify an immediate need for employers and opportunities for job seekers. As shown in the table below, registered nurses and retail salespersons top the list of jobs posted online in GO Virginia Region 1. Twelve of the top 20 occupations, based on the number of job postings, typically do not require postsecondary education.

The most in-demand occupations by online job postings in 2025 remain heavily concentrated in retail services, continuing the trend seen in 2021 and 2023. In 2025, fast food and counter workers, cashiers, stockers and order fillers, and retail salespersons all rank among the top occupations with the largest potential annual supply gaps. First-line supervisors of retail sales workers also remain a key position in demand, underscoring the ongoing need for both entry-level and supervisory roles in the retail sector. Healthcare occupations continue to be prominent among top-demand positions requiring post-secondary education. Registered nurses, nursing assistants, and home health aides appear again in the 2025 list, reflecting persistent regional demand for healthcare talent. In addition, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, which typically require an industry-recognized credential, remain among the top occupations with high annual demand; this occupation is closely tied with the logistics, transportation, and warehousing






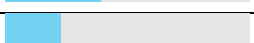
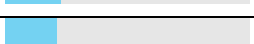
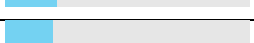
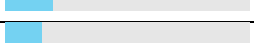
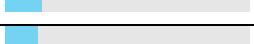
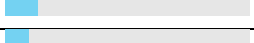

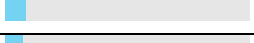




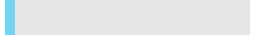
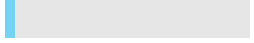

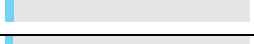


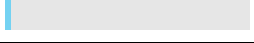
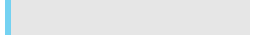
sector. Substitute teachers and registered nurses, typically requiring a postgraduate degree, joined this list of top occupations in 2025.

GO Virginia Region 1 Job Postings for Top 20 Occupations			
SOC	Occupation	Education	Total Job Postings
29-1141.00	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	3,567
41-2031.00	Retail Salespersons	None	1,499
41-1011.00	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,161
21-1093.00	Social and Human Service Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	838
11-9111.00	Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's degree	719
35-3023.00	Fast Food and Counter Workers	None	710
29-2061.00	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Postsecondary non-degree award	690
35-1012.00	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	689
53-3032.00	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree award	673
53-7065.00	Stockers and Order Fillers	High school diploma or equivalent	597
27-1026.00	Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	High school diploma or equivalent	506
29-1123.00	Physical Therapists	Doctoral or professional degree	477
37-2011.00	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	None	425
31-1131.00	Nursing Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	404
49-9071.00	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High school diploma or equivalent	363
35-2021.00	Food Preparation Workers	None	341
43-6014.00	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	High school diploma or equivalent	325
37-2012.00	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	None	318
25-1071.00	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	Doctoral or professional degree	317
29-1141.03	Critical Care Nurses	Bachelor's degree	306

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ](#).® Data reflect online job postings for the 365-day period ending 7/1/2025.

Similarly, certifications requested in the text of online job postings primarily support the healthcare sector. Healthcare skills were the most-requested skills in job ads over the observed period. Basic Life Support tops the list of the most requested 25 certifications (1,650), followed by Registered Nurse (1,575 postings).

Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS) appeared in 908 postings, Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation was listed 644 times, and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) appeared in 373 posts. Additional in-demand certifications not in the healthcare sector include a Driver's License (1,173), Commercial Driver's License (318), Secret Clearance (120), and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (119).

GO Virginia Region 1 Openings by Certification, 2025Q2		
Certificate Name	Total Ads	
Basic Life Support (BLS)	1,650	
Registered Nurse (RN)	1,575	
Driver's License	1,173	
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	908	
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	644	
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	373	
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	346	
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	318	
First Aid Certification	245	
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	219	
Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)	159	
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	135	
Secret Clearance	120	
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	119	
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	113	
ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification	68	
Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC)	66	
The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification	65	
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	58	
Medical Assistant Certification (MA)	49	
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	44	
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)	40	
HAZMAT	38	
Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR)	38	
Child Development Associate (CDA)	37	

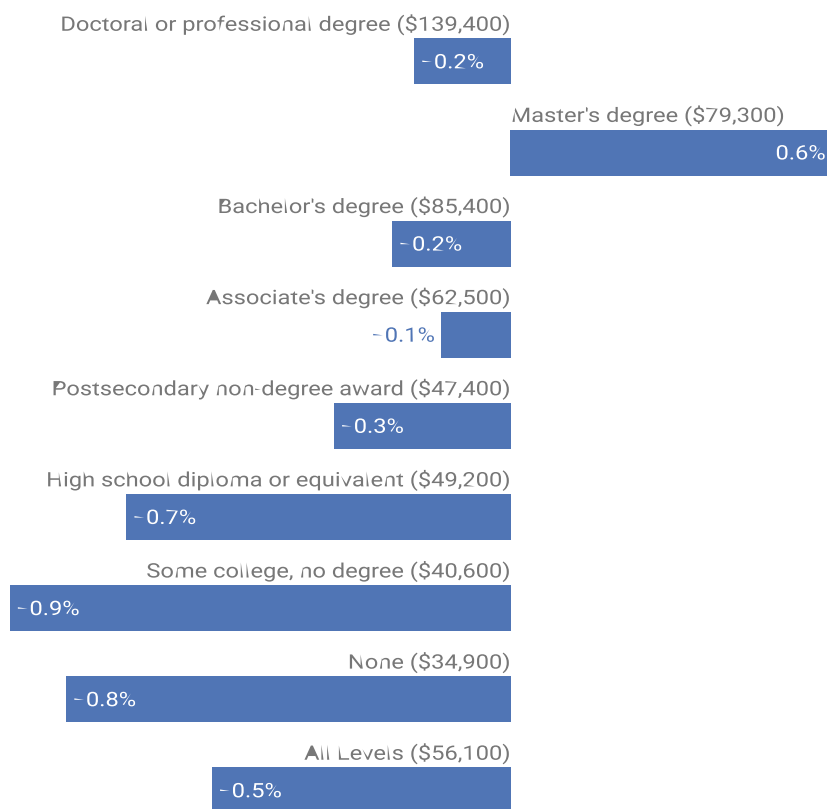
Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ®](#) RTI Data, Data reflect online job postings for the 365-day period ending 7/1/2025

## Demand by educational level

In a rapidly changing labor market, skills and occupations that are in demand today may not be in demand in the months or years ahead after completing a training program or education. For that reason, long-term gaps need to be considered in conjunction with current needs.

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. Overall employment in GO Virginia Region 1 is projected to contract 0.5% annually over the next ten years. Occupations typically requiring a master's degree are the only education group projected to expand in the next ten years, 0.6% annually. All other education levels are projected to decline in overall employment levels over the next decade.<sup>4</sup>

### Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



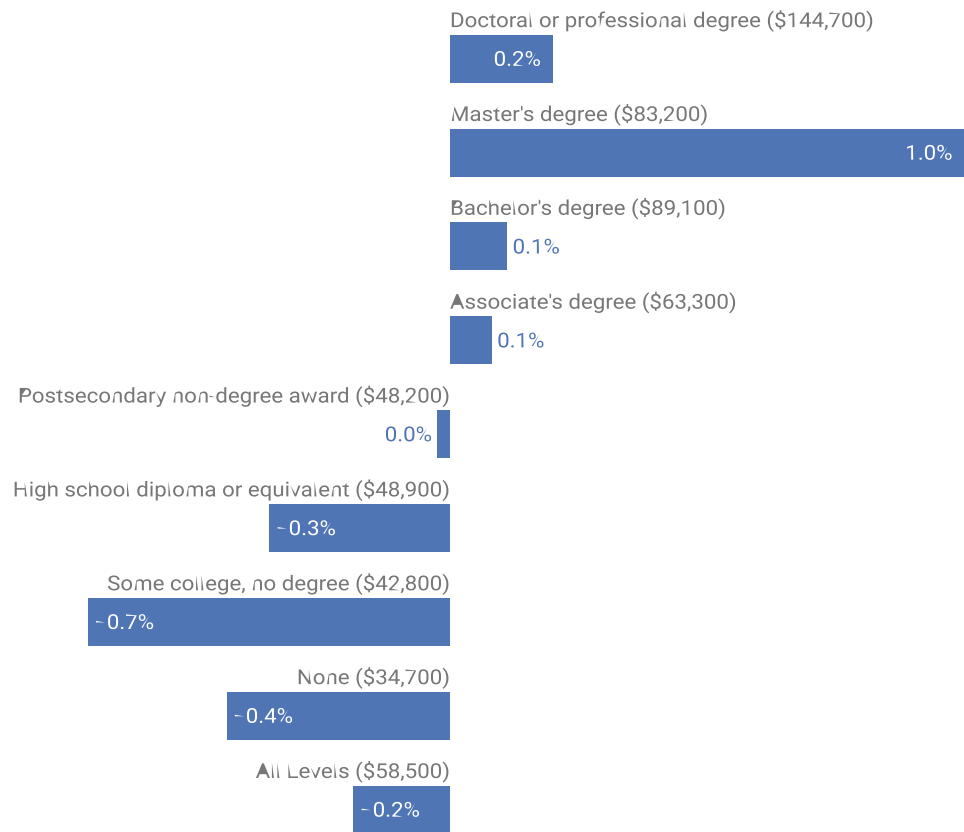
Source: JobsEQ®  
Data as of 2025Q1

The outlook for all educational levels is rosier in the GO Virginia Region 1 labor shed. Though employment overall is projected to decline over the next ten years, the rate of decline moderated for this overall region to 0.2% annually. Occupations that typically require an associate's degree (0.1%), bachelor's degree (0.1%), master's degree (1.0%), or a doctoral or professional degree (0.2%) are all projected to expand in this region. Occupations that typically have no educational or training requirements (-0.4%), require a high

<sup>4</sup> Estimates of employment data by occupation are current through 2025Q1. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

school diploma (-0.3%), and occupations that typically require some college, but not degree (-0.7%) are all projected to contract in employment in the next ten years.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®  
Data as of 2025Q1

Long-Term Demand

A long-term occupational demand considers the sector's growth, but also retirements, and career transitions. These demand needs are assessed for occupations with more than 100 workers in the four target industries. Among those, key occupations are defined as occupations that satisfy significance or dominance criteria in relation to one of the target industries.<sup>5</sup> Occupations that account for 1% of total sector employment are considered **significant**, while sector occupations that account for 20% or more of an occupation's total employment are considered **dominant**. Occupations that are identified as significant to the sector or dominant in the occupations' total employment are identified in the key occupations column.

Among occupations at the 6-digit SOC level in GO Virginia Region 1, future demand is the highest for fast food and counter workers, cashiers, and stockers and order fillers, despite the fact that these sectors are declining. The demand is mostly driven by a large turnover in the sectors due to workers exiting the labor

<sup>5</sup> This approach of significance and dominance was used in *The Commonwealth of Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan for July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020*.



market or moving to different sectors. For these three occupations, which typically do not require education beyond a high school diploma or equivalent for entry, there is a potential annual demand of at least 450 workers per occupation over the next decade. Occupations that require a postsecondary non-degree award, such as an industry-recognized certification, and have high annual demand include heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and nursing assistants.

Future Demand Needs in the Next Decade in GO Virginia Region 1: Occupations with Total Annual Demand > 100								
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Key Occupation	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Annual Growth Demand	Annual Separation Demand	Total Annual Demand
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	None	3,807	✓	\$28,400	-9	875	866
41-2011	Cashiers	None	4,248	✓	\$29,100	-73	740	667
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	High school diploma or equivalent	2,949	✓	\$35,500	-5	464	458
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	None	3,405	✓	\$34,800	-31	472	441
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	2,496		\$30,000	33	365	397
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	None	1,584	✓	\$36,700	-9	316	308
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree award	2,549	✓	\$51,700	-11	254	243
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	High school diploma or equivalent	2,699		\$71,200	-30	268	238
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	1,802		\$38,000	-9	244	235
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	None	1,794	✓	\$38,100	-8	228	220
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	None	1,630	✓	\$33,200	-8	221	213
51-2092	Team Assemblers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,949	✓	\$43,000	-13	221	208
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	High school diploma or equivalent	1,805	✓	\$38,600	-25	222	198
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	2,525	✓	\$109,900	-9	198	189

Future Demand Needs in the Next Decade in GO Virginia Region 1: Occupations with Total Annual Demand > 100								
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Key Occupation	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Annual Growth Demand	Annual Separation Demand	Total Annual Demand
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	High school diploma or equivalent	1,813	✓	\$40,300	-24	199	175
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	None	1,056	✓	\$35,200	10	165	175
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	Some college, no degree	1,438		\$32,600	-8	164	156
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	988	✓	\$40,300	-2	140	138
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,609	✓	\$49,500	-24	146	123
31-1121	Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	882		\$30,000	12	104	115
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	None	726	✓	\$30,600	-9	122	114
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	High school diploma or equivalent	1,150	✓	\$42,600	-9	121	111
47-2061	Construction Laborers	None	1,313	✓	\$42,000	0	110	110
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	None	843		\$30,500	-5	115	110
29-1141	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	2,217	✓	\$77,000	-5	112	106
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	Bachelor's degree	907		\$32,300	-1	107	106
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,457		\$51,500	-18	121	102

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ](#).®

Occupation wages are as of 2025Q1 and represent the average for all covered employment.

The following table reviews the most highly-demanded occupations that pay above-average wages.<sup>6</sup> Occupations which typically require a high school diploma or less and pay above-average wages include

<sup>6</sup> The average annual wage in the region is \$46,125.

farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers; first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers; correctional officers and jailers; first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers; school bus drivers; police and sheriff's patrol officers; and sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel.

<b>GO Virginia Region 1: Top 30 Occupations with Above-Average Wages</b>					
<b>SOC</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Typical Education Need For Entry</b>	<b>Current Employment 2025Q1</b>	<b>Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1</b>	<b>Total Demand Over the Next Ten Years</b>
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree award	2,549	\$51,700	2,432
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	High school diploma or equivalent	2,699	\$71,200	2,375
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	2,525	\$109,900	1,887
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,609	\$49,500	1,227
29-1141	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	2,217	\$77,000	1,062
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,457	\$51,500	1,024
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	Bachelor's degree	1,630	\$56,200	959
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High school diploma or equivalent	1,109	\$49,200	929
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,020	\$61,800	779
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School	High school diploma or equivalent	520	\$49,000	722
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's degree	986	\$80,900	703
33-3051	Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officers	High school diploma or equivalent	995	\$57,100	682
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	Master's degree	661	\$59,200	681
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Bachelor's degree	1,240	\$63,200	669
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	High school diploma or equivalent	750	\$50,900	665
13-1111	Management Analysts	Bachelor's degree	768	\$107,200	639
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	Bachelor's degree	798	\$62,000	635
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	766	\$73,800	633
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	High school diploma or equivalent	761	\$71,200	587
11-9199	Managers, All Other	Bachelor's degree	808	\$112,300	559
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	High school diploma or equivalent	603	\$69,400	524
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	878	\$80,000	511
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	High school diploma or equivalent	545	\$47,000	511

GO Virginia Region 1: Top 30 Occupations with Above-Average Wages					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Total Demand Over the Next Ten Years
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	Bachelor's degree	738	\$91,700	490
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Postsecondary non-degree award	672	\$47,900	490
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	Bachelor's degree	615	\$67,600	486
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Postsecondary non-degree award	661	\$57,200	466
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	High school diploma or equivalent	589	\$64,000	461
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	High school diploma or equivalent	789	\$59,400	461
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Bachelor's degree	771	\$55,100	454

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ](#)®

Occupation wages are as of 2025Q1 and represent the average for all covered employment.

## Target Industries' Demand

The table below presents the top 30 occupations, based on total annual demand projected, that meet the criteria of significance or dominance in at least one of the key regional sectors and have wages above the regional average. Twenty-one of the top 30 occupations are attainable with less than an associate degree, including heavy and tractor-trailer drivers; maintenance and repair workers, and first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers. The remaining nine occupations typically require at least a bachelor's degree, including general and operations managers; software developers; and purchasing agents, except wholesale, retail, and farm products.

GO Virginia Region 1: Top 30 Key Occupations with Wages Above Industry Average					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Total Demand Over the Next Ten Years
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree award	2,549	\$51,700	2,432
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	2,525	\$109,900	1,887
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High school diploma or equivalent	1,109	\$49,200	929
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,020	\$61,800	779
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	High school diploma or equivalent	750	\$50,900	665
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	766	\$73,800	633
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	High school diploma or equivalent	761	\$71,200	587

GO Virginia Region 1: Top 30 Key Occupations with Wages Above Industry Average					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Total Demand Over the Next Ten Years
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	878	\$80,000	511
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	High school diploma or equivalent	545	\$47,000	511
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	High school diploma or equivalent	589	\$64,000	461
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	High school diploma or equivalent	789	\$59,400	461
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	High school diploma or equivalent	465	\$60,600	422
15-1252	Software Developers	Bachelor's degree	685	\$120,100	404
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	High school diploma or equivalent	566	\$79,800	367
47-2111	Electricians	High school diploma or equivalent	509	\$69,200	332
13-1023	Purchasing Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail, and Farm Products	Bachelor's degree	311	\$68,700	314
51-4041	Machinists	High school diploma or equivalent	329	\$53,700	299
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	High school diploma or equivalent	281	\$55,200	257
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	High school diploma or equivalent	304	\$54,500	222
51-9124	Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	High school diploma or equivalent	228	\$46,500	194
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	Some college, no degree	352	\$55,800	189
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	High school diploma or equivalent	318	\$66,500	180
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	Bachelor's degree	248	\$97,100	157
11-2022	Sales Managers	Bachelor's degree	226	\$151,100	157
49-9099	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other	High school diploma or equivalent	171	\$46,200	152
13-1081	Logisticians	Bachelor's degree	156	\$83,600	147
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	Bachelor's degree	260	\$100,900	145
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	Bachelor's degree	232	\$96,200	129
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	Bachelor's degree	165	\$110,900	127
47-5022	Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining	High school diploma or equivalent	297	\$57,400	123

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ](#)®

Occupation wages are as of 2025Q1 and represent the average for all covered employment.

## Occupational Supply Analysis

This section provides a long-term view of how the Region 1 workforce pipeline aligns with projected employer needs. Unlike demand, which captures current hiring activity and employer urgency, supply analysis highlights where the available labor force will either fall short of or exceed projected demand over the next decade. Two key dimensions should be considered in this analysis: occupational gaps—where projected supply is insufficient to meet employer demand—and occupational surpluses—where there is an oversupply of workers relative to demand. Gaps signal areas where the region may face constraints to growth if pipelines are not expanded; surpluses point to occupations where the pathways are already oversaturated.

### Occupational Gaps

The occupations shown in the table below represent the occupations where the supply of workers is most insufficient to meet the demand from employers. These occupations are high-paying, with 26 of the 30 occupations paying above-average wages. The average wage for these occupations is \$72,294. The occupations facing the highest annual gaps are positions that require higher education; 19 out of 30 of these occupations require at least a bachelor's degree for entry, and three additional occupations require a higher degree. The top seven occupations facing a significant annual supply gap require this level of education of higher. Only eight of the 30 occupations with the highest annual gaps in the supply for workers have lower typical education requirements: four requiring a high school degree or equivalent, three requiring a postsecondary non-degree award, and one, restaurant cooks—an annual supply gap of three workers annually, does not have any educational requirements for entry.

There are several occupations and sectors that appear both heavily in demand and in limited supply in the region. The health care sector dominates this gaps analysis; three of the five occupations facing the largest annual gaps fall into this sector, with registered nurses facing the largest annual gap in this sector of nine registered nurses, followed by substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors (gap of eight workers annually), and nurse practitioners (seven workers annually). These occupations are highly demanded; the registered nurses occupation had the highest volume of advertised job roles in the region and other health care-related roles dominated job advertising. Management and professional roles also feature prominently among the largest projected gaps. General and operations managers; financial managers; accountants and auditors; and management analysts—all previously identified as in-demand and above-average wage positions—are forecasted to face persistent undersupply. These findings suggest that while the region values advanced business and financial expertise, the current pipeline is insufficient to meet anticipated demand.

The information technology sector is not highly demanded over the next ten years; however, despite the relatively low demand for this high-paying sector, the supply of qualified workers in the region is insufficient. Software developers are among the top occupations facing shortages (gap of seven workers annually), followed by information security analysts (three workers annually). These roles may not dominate job postings, but they are projected to face shortages.

GO Virginia Region 1: Occupations with Supply Gaps					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Annual Supply Gap
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	2,525	\$109,900	(12)
29-1141	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	2,217	\$77,000	(9)
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	Master's degree	661	\$59,200	(8)
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	220	\$117,300	(7)
15-1252	Software Developers	Bachelor's degree	685	\$120,100	(7)
13-1111	Management Analysts	Bachelor's degree	768	\$107,200	(7)
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	Bachelor's degree	320	\$113,600	(6)
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary non-degree award	2,549	\$51,700	(6)
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	Bachelor's degree	1,630	\$56,200	(6)
11-3031	Financial Managers	Bachelor's degree	436	\$142,700	(5)
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	High school diploma or equivalent	589	\$64,000	(5)
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's degree	986	\$80,900	(5)
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Bachelor's degree	1,240	\$63,200	(5)
31-9092	Medical Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award	552	\$38,600	(4)
33-3051	Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officers	High school diploma or equivalent	995	\$57,100	(4)
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	Bachelor's degree	738	\$91,700	(4)
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	Bachelor's degree	798	\$62,000	(4)
11-9199	Managers, All Other	Bachelor's degree	808	\$112,300	(4)
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	Bachelor's degree	338	\$59,400	(3)
33-2011	Firefighters	Postsecondary non-degree award	566	\$42,500	(3)
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	Bachelor's degree	907	\$32,300	(3)
11-9021	Construction Managers	Bachelor's degree	358	\$111,300	(3)
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	Bachelor's degree	165	\$110,900	(3)
21-1021	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	Bachelor's degree	464	\$53,200	(3)
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High school diploma or equivalent	1,109	\$49,200	(3)
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Bachelor's degree	771	\$55,100	(3)
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	Bachelor's degree	615	\$67,600	(3)
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	None	1,056	\$35,200	(3)



GO Virginia Region 1: Occupations with Supply Gaps					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Annual Supply Gap
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	Doctoral or professional degree	127	\$103,600	(2)
53-1047	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers, Except Aircraft Cargo Handling Supervisors	High school diploma or equivalent	465	\$60,600	(2)

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ.®

Occupation wages are as of 2025Q1 and represent the average for all covered employment.

## Occupational Surplus

The occupations listed in the table below represent occupations where the projected supply of workers is expected to exceed long-term employer demand in the region. Unlike the gap occupations, these roles are not constrained by pipeline shortages; instead the workforce entering or remaining in these occupations is likely to outpace demand. The occupations facing over-supply are generally low-paying—with an average wage of \$38,174 among the top 30 occupations with a surplus—and have low or no education requirements for entry. Of the 30 occupations, 15 do not require any education for entry, 14 require a high school diploma or equivalent, and one occupation—bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks—requires some college but no degree. None of the occupations facing the most significant worker surpluses require a college-level degree requirement.

The largest projected surpluses are concentrated in the retail and food service sectors. Cashiers show the highest annual oversupply at 63 workers, followed by fast food and counter workers (37 workers), waiters and waitresses (19 workers), retail salespersons (16 workers), and food preparation workers (seven workers). These roles also dominated the demand section, ranking among the most frequently posted jobs. Their inclusion here demonstrates that while employers consistently advertise for these workers due to turnover, the regional labor market is expected to produce more than enough workers to meet long-term demand. Clerical and administrative occupations also demonstrate projected oversupply. Customer service representatives (nine workers), office clerks (six workers), and bookkeeping and auditing clerks (three workers) all have a surplus of potential workers. Some of these, such as customer service representatives and office clerks, were highlighted in the demand analysis. Their presence here suggests that while current postings are high, long-term structural demand will not exceed the available labor pool, and the population of workers is sufficient.

GO Virginia Region 1: Occupations with Supply Surplus					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Annual Supply Surplus
41-2011	Cashiers	None	4,248	\$29,100	63
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	None	3,807	\$28,400	37
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	None	1,584	\$36,700	19
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	None	3,405	\$34,800	16
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	High school diploma or equivalent	1,805	\$38,600	9



GO Virginia Region 1: Occupations with Supply Surplus					
SOC	Title	Typical Education Need For Entry	Current Employment 2025Q1	Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1	Annual Supply Surplus
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	None	726	\$30,600	7
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	High school diploma or equivalent	1,813	\$40,300	6
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	None	282	\$29,700	6
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	None	668	\$30,100	6
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,609	\$49,500	5
47-5022	Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining	High school diploma or equivalent	297	\$57,400	5
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	None	1,794	\$38,100	4
47-5044	Loading and Moving Machine Operators, Underground Mining	None	165	\$80,400	4
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	High school diploma or equivalent	789	\$59,400	4
39-3091	Amusement and Recreation Attendants	None	182	\$28,800	3
47-5043	Roof Bolters, Mining	High school diploma or equivalent	125	\$81,500	3
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,457	\$51,500	3
33-9099	Protective Service Workers, All Other	High school diploma or equivalent	135	\$46,100	3
41-9041	Telemarketers	None	191	\$36,300	3
47-5041	Continuous Mining Machine Operators	None	140	\$73,000	3
33-9092	Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service Workers	None	116	\$28,600	3
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	Some college, no degree	1,047	\$45,200	3
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	High school diploma or equivalent	723	\$41,900	3
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	None	315	\$33,300	2
51-2092	Team Assemblers	High school diploma or equivalent	1,949	\$43,000	2
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	High school diploma or equivalent	545	\$47,000	2
39-9011	Childcare Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	532	\$29,200	2
33-9032	Security Guards	High school diploma or equivalent	689	\$41,900	2
43-3071	Tellers	High school diploma or equivalent	216	\$35,500	2
35-3011	Bartenders	None	480	\$44,800	2

Source: Chmura's [JobsEQ](#).®

Occupation wages are as of 2025Q1 and represent the average for all covered employment.

# REGION 1 PRIORITIES

GO Virginia Region 1 has a straightforward goal: **repurpose the Southwest Virginia economy to grow high-wage jobs.**

In accomplishing this goal, GO VA Region 1 is focusing on strategies that will shift the region's economy from being dominated by a single industry to a more sustainable and diversified economic base. Region 1 aligned priorities with those of the GO Virginia State Board. These priorities are mapped between the region and the state in the following chart:

GO Virginia Priorities		Region 1 Priorities
Support Collaboration	✓	Implementation Infrastructure & Coordinating Strategies Defined
Increase Higher Paying Jobs	✓	Targeting Basic Employers with Wages Above Regional Median Wage
Grow Industry Clusters	✓	Targeting Existing Industry Clusters Where SWVA has a Competitive Advantage
Talent Development	✓	Focused on Educational & Industry Alignment
Site Development	✓	Enhancing the Availability of Development-ready Sites
Scale Up Businesses	✓	Supporting Existing Businesses to Develop New Products and/or New Markets
Support Entrepreneurs	✓	Enhancing Regional Ecosystem with Increased Access to Capital & Mentoring Opportunities
Support Economic Development	✓	Focused on Product Development & Information/Data Capacity Critical to Industry Recruitment

# PRIMARY REGIONAL TARGET SECTORS

*Significant similarities exist among the three planning districts as it relates to industry targets.* The chart below exhibits the overlap of the primary target industries of those who are working to diversify the region's economy. Overall target sectors are listed in purple text with sub-sectors displayed in black text.

Target Sectors	LENOWISCO PDC 1	Cumberland Plateau PDC 2	Mount Rogers PDC 3	VCEDA*	MRRP**	Workforce Dev. Board Area 1	Workforce Dev. Board Area 2
Agriculture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Aquaculture	X	X	X	X			
Industrial Hemp	X	X	X	X			
Construction			X	X			X
Distribution and Logistics	X	X	X	X	X		X
Energy	X	X		X			X
Clean Coal	X	X		X			
Entrepreneurship	X	X		X		X	X
Existing Businesses	X	X		X	X	X	X
Federal Contracting	X	X		X			
Healthcare	X	X		X	X	X	X
Information Technology	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Data Centers	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Call Centers	X	X	X	X		X	
Software Engineering/ Development	X	X		X		X	X
Cyber Security	X	X		X		X	X
Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Food and Beverage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plastics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advanced Material	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wood Products	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fabricated Materials	X	X		X	X	X	X
Machinery	X	X		X		X	X
Transportation Equipment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tourism	X	X	X	X		X	
Unmanned Systems	X			X			X

\*VCEDA - Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority

\*\*MRRP – Mount Rogers Regional Partnership

Region 1's targeted industry clusters continue to reflect both quantitative analysis and qualitative input from regional stakeholders. Common targets across the region include:

- Agriculture and Value-Added Food Production Emphasizing food and beverage processing and agribusiness innovation.
- Advanced Manufacturing, including plastics, advanced materials, wood products, and fabricated components.
- Information Technology, with a focus on data centers, software development, and tech-enabled services.
- Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing, particularly in Planning District 3, where proximity to Interstates 81 and 77 and the potential for an inland port present strategic advantages.

While tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural assets remain central to regional identity and economic vitality, they are not considered primary targeted industries under GO Virginia due to lower average wages. However, these sectors continue to be promoted by local planning districts and may serve as complementary assets to broader economic development efforts.

Healthcare has become an increasing focus among regional entities, and the GO Virginia Region 1 Council has recently added healthcare as a workforce development strategy. While healthcare is not traditionally considered a GO Virginia priority due to its non-traded nature, the sector plays a vital role in addressing regional workforce needs and enhancing quality of life. Recent guidance from the GO Virginia State Board now allows consideration of high-impact healthcare initiatives—such as centers of excellence, innovative care delivery models, and facilities serving out-of-state populations—that produce higher wages and external revenue. Region 1's inclusion of healthcare reflects a strategic response to labor market demands and recognizes the potential for targeted investments to strengthen the region's talent pipeline and economic resilience.

The decline of the coal and energy sector continues to influence economic conditions across Region 1, especially in its westernmost areas. This change has affected demographics, employment levels, and overall quality of life. Meanwhile, the eastern part of the region benefits from strategic transportation routes and rising interest in logistics and distribution, highlighting the importance of officially recognizing this sector as a key priority cluster.

Across all planning districts, regional collaboration remains a fundamental part of economic strategy. Shared challenges include:

- Declining or stagnant population growth, particularly among younger cohorts.
- Lower employment participation rates as compared to state and national trends.
- An aging workforce and persistent job vacancies.
- Limited awareness of modern manufacturing and skilled trades.
- Gaps in communication between education providers and employers.

These challenges have prompted efforts to improve K–12 career pathways and workforce development programs aligned with industry needs. GO Virginia-funded initiatives have started to close these gaps, building stronger links between education and employment.

Entrepreneurship and supporting existing businesses remain key parts of Region 1's strategy. Although funding and infrastructure are limited, there's a strong opportunity to build a resource-rich entrepreneurial ecosystem. Priorities include:

- Expanding access to capital.
- Developing accelerator and incubator programs.
- Enhancing mentorship, networking and commercialization support.

These efforts aim to empower new and growing businesses, diversify the regional economy, and build long-term resilience.

# SWVA BEYOND THE NUMBERS

The analysis in this section considers whether a sufficient number of workers are in GO VA Region 1 or the labor shed with the skills needed to attract the target industries. The threshold for an ample supply of workers varies across industries and occupations, but a general threshold of a ratio of at least 50:1 of potential candidates (employed plus unemployed) to the new employer demand is used. If gaps exist for occupations that the new firms would require, the number of individuals in an alternative occupation that could be trained for the occupation in demand is considered (referred to as extended employment) along with new graduates in the region that possess the required skills.

## Region 1 Industry Targets

Based on the analysis of industries in GO Virginia Region One and upon an evaluation of the regional strengths highlighted by regional stakeholders, the five industry clusters are presented as potential target sectors that can provide above-average wages for residents in the region. These targeted industries include logistics, transportation, and warehousing alongside the four sectors in the original Growth and Diversification Plan.

Advanced manufacturing experienced a 2.0% decrease in employment from 16,787 in 2023Q1 to 16,444 in 2025Q1 but an increase in average annual wages from \$51,993 to \$57,051 over the same time period. For food and beverage manufacturing, average annual wages increased by 11.6% from \$51,734 to \$57,734, while employment contracted 4.5% from 1,466 to 1,401. For the energy and minerals industry in GO VA Region 1, employment increased by 3.4% from 3,687 to 3,813 and average annual wages increased by 7.4% from \$88,979 to \$95,556. For those working in IT in Region 1, employment increased by 0.2% to reach 2,347 in 2025Q1<sup>7</sup>. The logistics, transportation, and warehousing sector increased employment 8.2% to 4,084 from 3,775 in the first quarter of 2023 and average annual wages increased 3.1% to \$55,901.

---

<sup>7</sup> Occupation wages are not available for comparison over time due to survey design in the underlying data series.

Key Targets for GO Virginia Region One					
	Advanced Manufacturing	Food and Beverage Manufacturing	Energy and Minerals	Information Technology	Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing
Location Quotient	1.57	0.86	3.49	0.59	0.69
Average Annual Wage	\$57,051	\$57,734	\$95,556	\$98,200	\$55,901
Employment	16,444	1,401	3,813	2,347	4,084
Export Sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	The region possesses competitive advantages in many manufacturing industries that pay above-average wages.	The prominence of agriculture in the region creates an environment conducive to attracting food and beverage manufacturers to the area.	High wages and access to natural resources showcase the importance of energy to the region.	Defined as a cluster of occupations that span across multiple industries. CGI, DP Facilities South, and Northrop Grumman are examples of this emerging cluster.	The announcement of a new Inland port in Washington County has the potential of bringing high wage jobs for low experience/education occupations.

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ®, 2025Q1.

Tourism and healthcare are also critically important to the region's economy. As part of a comprehensive economic development strategy, these two industries are often part of a prospective employer's decision to locate or expand in a region. While assets in tourism and healthcare add to the quality of life of an area, which have become an important part of the site selection formula, they were not included among the target industries. While the GO Virginia continues to stress the importance of these two industries in SWVA, projects involving these two industries are not likely to be eligible for GO Virginia funding.

Given the significant natural, recreational, and cultural assets of the region, Southwest Virginia has invested heavily in building the tourism industry. According to the Virginia Tourism Corporation Economic Impact of Domestic Travel in Virginia report, travelers spent a total of \$766.7 million in GO VA Region 1 in 2023, an increase of \$172.0 million since 2019, which makes this industry one of the significant revenue generators in the region. However, due to the relatively low wages of the tourism industry when compared to the region's average, tourism is not included in the target industries of GO Virginia Region 1. Similarly, health care was not selected as a potential target as it generally grows with the region's population and is not targeted by economic developers for expansion into a region.

A closer look at the traded and local sectors within Region 1 shows that traded sectors experienced a greater impact due to the pandemic. From 2023Q1 to 2025Q1, employment increased 2.3% in local sectors, with a 7.7% increase in average annual wage to \$41,663. During the same period, employment decreased 1.4% in traded sectors, with an 8.8% increase in average wages to \$49,817. Despite the reduction in traded

sector employment, growth in local sectors was strong enough to mark a net increase of nearly 1,500 jobs when combined.

## Advanced Manufacturing

There is no standard definition of advanced manufacturing. Some would argue that all manufacturing industries are transforming toward “advanced” with the use of total quality management, statistical process control, and just-in-time inventories. Therefore, in the report, we include all manufacturing sectors under advanced manufacturing.

The following manufacturing industries in Region 1 have recently performed relatively well, adding at least 50 employees since the last report:

- Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing (+104 employees)
- Machinery Manufacturing (+102 employees)
- Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing (+112 employees)
- Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing (+136 employees)
- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (+107 employees)

Five industries within the advanced manufacturing cluster are examined to illustrate potential regional labor pool and supply chain capacity and gaps with the advanced manufacturing cluster. The five industries—transportation equipment manufacturing; plastics and rubber products manufacturing; machinery manufacturing; electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing; and chemical manufacturing—were chosen because they generally pay above-average wages and account for a significant share of regional employment (as indicated by the location quotients). Since 2017, employment in transportation equipment and machinery manufacturing has fallen, while the other three sectors have expanded. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted these industries, with the exception of plastic and rubber product manufacturing, and only the plastics manufacturing and electrical equipment manufacturing sectors have recovered to their pre-pandemic totals. Recent years have shown strong growth for the highlighted manufacturing industries as they have begun to rebound from the impact of the pandemic. Between 2023Q1 and 2025Q1, employment in chemical manufacturing in GO VA Region 1 increased by 1.1% and average annual wages increased by 10.0%. For transportation equipment, employment increased by 3.4% and average annual wages increased by 7.8%. For plastics and rubber products, employment increased by 0.9% while wages increased by 4.9%. Employment in electrical equipment, appliance, and components increased 12.2%, and average annual wages increased by 19.1%. Machinery manufacturing employment has increased 7.7% since 2023; wages have matched that pace, increasing 7.8% during the same period.

Illustrative Advanced Manufacturing Industries, Four Quarters Ending 2025Q1							
NAICS	Manufacturing	GO VA Region 1			GO VA Region 1 Labor Shed		
		Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient	Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient
336	Transportation Equipment	3,276	\$54,287	2.25	9,874	\$70,042	1.61
326	Plastics and Rubber Products	1,596	\$64,156	2.75	4,587	\$62,968	1.88



Illustrative Advanced Manufacturing Industries, Four Quarters Ending 2025Q1							
		GO VA Region 1			GO VA Region 1 Labor Shed		
NAICS	Manufacturing	Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient	Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient
333	Machinery Manufacturing	1,413	\$62,186	1.57	4,037	\$66,249	1.07
335	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Components	1,253	\$68,096	3.67	5,876	\$68,301	4.09
325	Chemical	994	\$63,098	1.36	12,011	\$101,737	3.89

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ®, 2025Q1.

## Agriculture/Food & Beverage Manufacturing

Food and beverage manufacturers in GO VA Region 1 pay an annual average wage of \$57,734 as of 2025Q1, which is higher than the average wage (\$46,871) in the labor shed. It is also an industry that generally does not experience steep declines during recessions, thus providing stability for the regional economy.

A comparative advantage of this target industry is that it is well-positioned to have easy access to the agricultural sector, a key player in the supply chain of food and beverage industries. Over 15% of the state's farms are in Region 1, with sales of cattle and calves exceeding \$215 million and total crop sales at \$94.6 million. As Virginia's cattle sales total nearly \$700 million, Region 1 makes up 31.5% of Virginia's cattle sales.

Agriculture in GO VA Region 1			
	Region 1 Total in 2017	Region 1 Total in 2022	Percent of Virginia in 2022
Farms	8,705	6,300	16.2%
Farmland (acres)	1,336,785	1,117,046	15.3%
Milk from Cows (\$)	\$20,955,000	\$13,988,000	4.0%
Cattle & Calves Sold	269,150	222,584	30.2%
Cattle & Calves Sold (\$)	\$240,794,000	\$219,236,000	31.5%
Total Crop Sales (\$)	\$57,350,000	\$94,632,000	5.0%
Total Livestock Sales	\$290,904,000	\$241,325,000	6.7%
Source: Census of Agriculture (2017 & 2022)			

Both the number of farms and the total farmland acreage decreased in GO VA Region 1 and across the state. The number of farms decreased from 2017 to 2022 in the state of Virginia (-9.8%) and Region 1 (-27.6%), while total farmland acreage decreased -6.3% in Virginia and -16.4% in Region 1. Total livestock

sales in Region 1 declined -17% over this period; however, total crop sales rose 65%. At the national level, the number of farms declined by -6.9% while farmland decreased -2.2% over the same five-year period.

The average wage of all occupations associated with a typical food and beverage manufacturing expansion of 100 employees is \$44,696, just below the regional average wage. The typical entry-level education for most of these occupations is a high school degree or less. Only six of the 100 jobs in the expansion typically require an award or degree (managers, scientists, technicians, accountants, and truck drivers).

While the majority of these jobs require no previous experience, on-the-job training is key to occupations in this industry. Of the 100 new jobs created by a food and beverage manufacturing expansion, 45 workers typically require short-term on-the-job training, and another 41 employees require moderate-term on-the-job training. Three workers (industrial machinery mechanics and butchers and meat cutters) require long-term training and another eleven employees (supervisors, managers, and human resource specialists) typically do not require on-the-job training.

Three of the top five in-demand occupations for a food and beverage manufacturer are food processing workers (SOC 51-3000). When comparing the food and beverage manufacturer's new demand with GO VA Region 1's labor supply, food processing workers demonstrate a gap in supply. When the region is expanded to the labor shed, there is ample supply of food processing workers.

A potential opportunity for the region is to invest in facilities for animal slaughtering and processing. Farmers have stated their need for such a facility since cattle are currently shipped to the Midwest for slaughtering and processing. For the most part, the labor force of GO VA Region 1 can handle construction of a new plant or the expansion of an existing animal slaughtering and processing firm. For this analysis, Chmura used a need for 20 employees by a firm in this industry as a stress test for the region's labor force. Among the top 10 occupations typically required in this industry, Region 1 has ample supply for eight occupations. Though the region has short supply of two occupations—meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers; and slaughterers and meat packers—the labor shed has sufficient employment to offer a favorable candidate/opening ratio. Additionally, there is a potential supply for the top two occupations of workers currently employed in other industries with similar skills and comparable wages.

GO Virginia Region 1: 20 Employee Expansion in Animal Slaughtering and Processing Sector				
SOC	Title	New Employer Demand	Regional Average Wage	Potential Candidates per Opening
51-3022	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	4	\$34,000	13
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2	\$38,100	1,304
51-3023	Slaughterers and Meat Packers	2	\$35,200	7
51-3021	Butchers and Meat Cutters	1	\$36,500	125
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1	\$73,800	901

GO Virginia Region 1: 20 Employee Expansion in Animal Slaughtering and Processing Sector				
SOC	Title	New Employer Demand	Regional Average Wage	Potential Candidates per Opening
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	1	\$39,700	83
51-3099	Food Processing Workers, All Other	1	\$36,100	52
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	1	\$40,200	195
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1	\$64,000	735
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	1	\$43,000	819

## Energy and Minerals

As noted earlier, the energy cluster has a location quotient of 3.49 indicating that employment in GO VA Region 1 is more than three times as concentrated in the region as it is in the nation. Moreover, the annual average wage in the cluster was \$95,556 in the first quarter of 2025—70% higher than the average wage in Region 1.

About 60% of the employment in this strong regional asset is tied to coal mining, which is in decline. Alternative uses for coal may become available in the future and help revive the industry. There are a number of research projects that have the potential to change the trend. In early 2025, Virginia Tech was announced to be spearheading Expand Appalachia Core-CM, a research coalition focused on realizing the full potential of the region's natural resources, including extracting valuable rare earth elements (REE) from coal and coal waste. This project, backed by the Department of Energy, comes with nearly \$10 million in funding and builds on previous projects such as Evolve CAPP, which focused on rare earth element extraction and separation.<sup>8</sup> In August 2025, Aclara Resources announced it had entered into a strategic partnership in the operation of its pilot rare earth element (REE) separation plant in Blacksburg, Virginia.<sup>9</sup> In 2022, Governor Youngkin also announced a first-of-its-kind energy technology testbed area, using previously-mined land as a hub to promote energy innovation.<sup>10</sup> This hub, known as the Energy DELTA lab, was highlighted as the central initiative to diversify Southwest Virginia's economy in Virginia's 2022 Energy Plan.

The Energy DELTA lab will include technological innovation related to renewable energy projects. Wind and solar projects have previously been considered in the region and would diversify the energy cluster away from its dependence on the coal industry; the introduction of the new energy innovation hub will further support this diversification. Both industries pay well in the nation. During the first quarter of 2025, the national annual average wage for solar electric power generation was \$127,665 and wind electric power

<sup>8</sup> Virginia Tech News, "Virginia Tech Selected to Lead \$10 Million Critical Mineral Research Coalition in Appalachia," <https://news.vt.edu/articles/2025/02/virginia-tech-selected-to-lead--10-million-critical-mineral-rese.html>, accessed August 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Mining.com, "Aclara Resources, Virginia Tech Launch Rare Earths Separation Pilot Plant," <https://www.mining.com/aclara-resources-virginia-tech-launch-rare-earths-separation-pilot-plant>, accessed August 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Energy DELTA Lab, "Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces Energy Technology Testbed Will Be Developed in Southwest Virginia," <https://www.energydeltalab.org/news/governor-glenn-youngkin-announces-energy-technology-testbed-will-be-developed-in-southwest-virginia>, accessed August 2025.

generation employees earned an annual average of \$136,460. The former includes occupations such as solar photovoltaic installers, electrical engineers, general and operations managers, and electricians. The latter industry employs similar occupations (except for solar photovoltaic installers), as well as occupations such as civil engineers, wind turbine service technicians, construction managers, machinists, and mechanical engineers.

Hydroelectric power (hydroelectric) is another clean source of energy and diversification. Dominion Energy currently has two hydroelectric facilities in Virginia; one located in Louisa County and one in Bath County. Combined, they power approximately 750,250 homes.<sup>11</sup> Dominion canceled a proposed \$2 billion pump storage power station in Tazewell county in late 2024, citing high costs and cheaper, emerging forms of renewable energy.<sup>12</sup> Nationally, hydroelectric power generation provides an annual average wage of \$136,783.

In July 2025, the Virginia Department of Energy announced they were officially moving forward with nuclear development in Southwest Virginia.<sup>13</sup> The project will be supported with a \$100,000 grant from the Virginia Clean Energy Innovation Bank (VCEIB) and a near-million dollar GO Virginia grant to be used for additional funding. Wise county is the most likely site for the reactor, and the goal of the project is to provide 24/7 reliable power, supporting industry in the region. Nationally, nuclear electric power generation has an annual average wage of \$165,320.

GO Virginia Region 1 has also funded several energy-related projects, including:

- InvestSWVA's Project Oasis
- InvestSWVA's Project Energizer
- InvestSWVA's Project Innovation
- InvestSWVA's Project Veer
- Appalachian Voices' Energy Storage & Electrification Manufacturing Jobs.
- Appalachian Voices' Solar Jobs, Manufacturing & Utility-Scale Investment for Far SWVA
- Virginia Tech's Coal to Graphene Study
- Wise County's WiseLink Coalfield Transformation Project
- Wise County's Microreactor Feasibility Study
- Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development's Wildwood Natural Gas Extension
- VHCC's Electrical Program Modernization Initiative

---

<sup>11</sup> Dominion Energy, "Hydroelectric Power Facilities", <https://www.dominionenergy.com/about/making-energy/hydroelectric-power-facilities>, accessed August 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Cardinal News, "Dominion Cancels Tazewell Pump Storage Project," <https://cardinalnews.org/2024/11/22/dominion-cancels-tazewell-pump-storage-project/>, accessed August 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Virginia Department of Energy, "Virginia Moves Forward on Advanced Nuclear Deployment in Southwest Virginia", [https://www.energy.virginia.gov/public/documents/newsroom/2025/Virginia%20Move\\_Press\\_.pdf](https://www.energy.virginia.gov/public/documents/newsroom/2025/Virginia%20Move_Press_.pdf), accessed August 2025.

## Information & Emerging Technology

Information technology occupations are an emerging driver of growth in the region, though not necessarily tied to a particular sector. Technology skills are increasingly needed in every industry to stay competitive. However, the growing concentration of information technology skills in the region points to an opportunity to attract firms that need such skills.

As shown in the table below, computer and math occupations pay a much higher average wage than the average occupation wage of GO VA Region 1, at \$98,500. With 2,521 people in the region working in computer and math occupations, the location quotient (LQ) for the occupation is 0.59, meaning that workers with these skills have a concentration roughly half that found in the nation, on average. The LQ for the labor shed is a bit higher at 0.72. Consequently, attracting firms that need computer and math talent is an aspirational strategy.

Occupation Snapshot of Computer and Mathematical Occupations, Four Quarters Ending with 2025Q1							
		Go Virginia Region 1			GO Virginia Region 1 Labor Shed		
SOC	Occupation	Employment	LQ	Annual Mean Wage	Employment	LQ	Annual Mean Wage
15-1252	Software Developers	685	0.51	\$120,100	3,487	0.61	\$111,700
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	352	0.61	\$55,800	1,773	0.73	\$56,200
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	260	0.63	\$100,900	1,446	0.84	\$94,800
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	205	0.80	\$88,700	995	0.92	\$89,300
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	165	1.12	\$110,900	749	1.21	\$111,600
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	152	0.41	\$96,700	992	0.63	\$89,400
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	89	0.74	\$74,800	417	0.82	\$69,000
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	88	0.61	\$108,300	475	0.78	\$112,100
15-2051	Data Scientists	81	0.43	\$111,300	438	0.55	\$104,500
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	80	0.93	\$95,400	358	0.99	\$92,600
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	73	0.46	\$95,700	415	0.62	\$96,200
15-1242	Database Administrators	59	0.98	\$92,400	259	1.02	\$90,400

Occupation Snapshot of Computer and Mathematical Occupations, Four Quarters Ending with 2025Q1							
		Go Virginia Region 1			GO Virginia Region 1 Labor Shed		
SOC	Occupation	Employment	LQ	Annual Mean Wage	Employment	LQ	Annual Mean Wage
15-1243	Database Architects	55	1.06	\$146,900	255	1.16	\$125,300
15-1251	Computer Programmers	53	0.52	\$91,400	291	0.69	\$98,700
15-1255	Web and Digital Interface Designers	45	0.44	\$58,300	267	0.62	\$58,500
15-1254	Web Developers	41	0.59	\$94,800	220	0.76	\$90,500
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	14	0.48	\$130,600	90	0.72	\$123,900
15-2041	Statisticians	11	0.47	\$92,000	72	0.71	\$89,400
15-2011	Actuaries	8	0.34	\$116,300	36	0.38	\$116,000
15-2021	Mathematicians	3	1.50	\$114,500	19	2.20	\$111,500
15-2099	Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other	2	0.55	\$64,900	12	0.67	\$62,900
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	2,521	0.59	\$98,500	13,064	0.72	\$94,300

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ®, 2025Q1.

## Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing

The proposed development of an inland port in GO Virginia Region 1 has renewed focus on the logistics, transportation, and warehousing cluster as a possible emerging opportunity for the region. Although the cluster's location quotient (0.78) remains below the national average, this sector has been gaining traction, powered by increased e-commerce activity and renewed investment along the various interstates that cross the region.

Despite declines prior to the pandemic, the logistics, transportation, and warehousing cluster has grown in GO Virginia Region 1 since 2020. At the time of the last report, employment had declined 1.2% from the first quarter of 2017 to the last quarter of 2022; however, since that report, employment has reversed course. In early 2023, employment began to rebound and in the first quarter of 2025, employment has increased 4.7% since 2017. Wages have also soared during this period, increasing 17.9% from 2017 and increasing 4.9% from the time of the last report.

Three industries within the logistics, transportation, and warehousing cluster are examined to identify the most relevant industry sectors for growth within this sector. These three industries are sectors that both have above-average wages, a high location quotient, and a high contribution to overall GDP of the sector; these three occupations are: **rail transportation** (18.9% of GDP), non-covered; **general freight trucking**, local



(15.2% of GDP); and **specialized freight trucking, local** (15.2% of GDP). These industry sectors are also primed to grow with the creation of a new inland port in the region. Between the last quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2025, employment in the specialized freight trucking sector fell 6.2%, while wages increased 5.4% during the same period; region 1 has a location quotient of 3.26 in this sector indicating the region is highly specialized in this sector. Employment in the general freight trucking sector increased 10.4% since 2022, with wages increased 5.2% to \$58,996. Non-covered rail transportation employment increased 5.4% and average annual wages increased 7.9% from the last quarter of 2022.

Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing Industries, Four Quarters Ending 2025Q1							
		GO VA Region 1			GO VA Region 1 Labor Shed		
NAICS	Sector	Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient	Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient
484220	Specialized Freight (except Used Goods) Trucking, Local	614	\$57,565	3.26	1,417	\$62,334	1.79
484110	General Freight Trucking, Local	549	\$58,996	2.04	1,163	\$57,802	1.03
482110	Rail Transportation (non-covered)	266	\$97,532	2.13	994	\$95,819	1.90

Source: Chmura's *JobsEQ*®, 2025Q1

In recent years, momentum has been building around the proposal for a new inland port in the Mount Rogers Planning District, near Bristol in Washington County. Inland ports have proven to be catalysts for regional growth across the country. Virginia's own Inland Port in Front Royal, established in 1989, transformed the Shenandoah Valley economy, helping generate billions in output, attracting major employers, and supporting thousands of jobs over more than three decades. Similar stories can be seen in South Carolina, where the ports at Greer and Dillon reshaped logistics and manufacturing growth in their regions. At the time of the last report, the Virginia General Assembly had assessed the feasibility of opening a new inland port in the Central Virginia Planning District or the Mount Rogers Planning District. The study concluded that the Mount Rogers Planning District meets the physical condition and market-driven requirements to justify further investigation of the feasibility and impact of an inland port in the area.<sup>14</sup>

The Virginia General Assembly study, conducted by Moffatt and Nichol in coordination with Insight Research Corporation, estimated the potential economic impact of a proposed new inland port in Virginia. The modeled concept envisioned a 100-acre inland port with an annual lift capacity of 50,000 containers—opening at 15,000 lifts in its first year and scaling to 45,000 lifts within a decade. With an estimated \$55 million capital cost (excluding land), the port could attract new manufacturing and warehouse facilities, producing a cumulative \$1.75 billion in economic impact over twenty years and supporting nearly 1,400 permanent jobs, along with more than 1,300 temporary construction jobs.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Port Authority, and Moffatt & Nichol. *Inland Port Study: Feasibility Analysis of Locating an Inland Port in the Commonwealth*. Reports to the General Assembly, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Port Authority, and Moffatt & Nichol. *Inland Port Study: Feasibility Analysis of Locating an Inland Port in the Commonwealth*. Reports to the General Assembly, 2023.

Since 2023, this idea has moved from feasibility to action. The Virginia Port Authority has identified the Oak Park Center for Business and Industry in Washington County as the preferred site.<sup>16</sup> By the end of 2024, the Virginia Port Authority had completed a 30% preliminary design for the inland port, identifying a flexible configuration to manage capital costs and promote the economic interests of the region.<sup>17</sup> A key development was the confirmation of a "local rail service" model, which uses the Bristol railyard as a staging area and smaller local trains to move containers to the site.<sup>18</sup> While this approach is less efficient and costlier to operate, it substantially reduces initial infrastructure needs and is confirmed as viable for startup operations. Additional field investigations are planned to expand beyond the Oak Park site. In 2025, engineering efforts will advance to 60% design, refining cost estimates, construction sequencing, and property impacts while preparing for permitting and procurement. Commercial outreach and a full economic impact study will evaluate job creation, tax revenue, and supply chain opportunities to strengthen the business case.<sup>19</sup> In February 2025, the Port Authority issued an RFP to conduct a comprehensive economic impact study to better quantify the broader regional developments and benefits.

Even without the development of the inland port, Region 1 shows strong and growing demand for logistics, transportation, and warehousing occupations. The cluster employs more than 4,000 workers with an average annual wage of \$54,829, and projected demand over the next two years exceeds 830 positions. The greatest demand lies in motor vehicle operators (338 positions) and material moving workers (218 positions), which together account for two-thirds of anticipated openings. These roles—ranging from truck drivers to stockers and order fillers—remain essential for both regional manufacturers and distributors, and typically require limited formal education, providing accessible career pathways with above-average wages. Additional high-demand categories include material recording and dispatching workers (48 positions), business operations specialists (24 positions), and supervisors of transportation and material moving workers (22 positions). Demand is also present in specialized, higher-wage occupations such as rail transportation workers and vehicle mechanics. Existing freight activity, regional infrastructure, and supply chain needs are driving substantial employment demand across a wide range of skill levels in this sector; after the development and implementation of a new inland port, this demand can be expected to increase substantially.

---

<sup>16</sup> Virginia Port Authority, "Virginia Inland Port Study Q4 2023 General Assembly Update – December 1, 2023," <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2023/RD678>, accessed August 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Virginia Port Authority, "Virginia Inland Port Study Q1 2025 General Assembly Update – March 1, 2025," <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2025/RD195>, accessed August 2025.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

**GO Virginia Region 1: Occupation Distribution of the Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing Cluster<sup>20</sup>**

<b>SOC</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Current Employment 2025Q1</b>	<b>Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1</b>	<b>Total Demand Over the Next Two Years</b>
53-3000	Motor Vehicle Operators	1,669	\$50,500	338
53-7000	Material Moving Workers	870	\$39,500	218
43-5000	Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching, and Distributing Workers	260	\$42,800	48
13-1000	Business Operations Specialists	134	\$82,300	24
49-3000	Vehicle and Mobile Equipment Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	126	\$59,500	19
53-1000	Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers	111	\$62,300	22
53-4000	Rail Transportation Workers	111	\$76,300	16
11-1000	Top Executives	85	\$119,400	13
43-9000	Other Office and Administrative Support Workers	66	\$41,000	13
43-4000	Information and Record Clerks	59	\$41,600	14
49-9000	Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	55	\$62,900	10
11-3000	Operations Specialties Managers	46	\$117,700	8
43-3000	Financial Clerks	41	\$45,600	7
53-2000	Air Transportation Workers	35	\$138,000	8
15-1200	Computer Occupations	34	\$90,100	4
43-1000	Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	31	\$65,600	5
41-3000	Sales Representatives, Services	30	\$71,400	5
49-1000	Supervisors of Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	25	\$84,800	4
43-6000	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	25	\$46,400	5
13-2000	Financial Specialists	21	\$83,400	3
47-2000	Construction Trades Workers	19	\$62,800	3
53-6000	Other Transportation Workers	18	\$50,600	5
47-4000	Other Construction and Related Workers	18	\$66,000	2
51-9000	Other Production Occupations	16	\$47,200	4
37-2000	Building Cleaning and Pest Control Workers	15	\$38,900	4
11-9000	Other Management Occupations	14	\$115,700	2
51-4000	Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	13	\$70,400	2
19-5000	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists and Technicians	12	\$74,100	3
33-9000	Other Protective Service Workers	12	\$47,200	4
41-2000	Retail Sales Workers	12	\$38,600	3
17-2000	Engineers	11	\$105,500	1
49-2000	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	8	\$85,500	1

<sup>20</sup> Table only includes occupation groups with projected demand over the next two years.

**GO Virginia Region 1: Occupation Distribution of the Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing Cluster<sup>20</sup>**

<b>SOC</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Current Employment 2025Q1</b>	<b>Avg. Annual Wages 2025Q1</b>	<b>Total Demand Over the Next Two Years</b>
47-1000	Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	7	\$86,400	1
51-8000	Plant and System Operators	7	\$79,100	1
11-2000	Advertising, Marketing, Promotions, Public Relations, and Sales Managers	7	\$151,100	1
41-4000	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	7	\$71,600	1
27-4000	Media and Communication Equipment Workers	5	\$51,500	1
41-1000	Supervisors of Sales Workers	4	\$76,700	1
51-2000	Assemblers and Fabricators	4	\$40,500	1
51-1000	Supervisors of Production Workers	4	\$90,700	1
27-1000	Art and Design Workers	3	\$54,700	1
15-2000	Mathematical Science Occupations	3	\$100,300	1
17-3000	Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Mapping Technicians	3	\$78,600	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,079</b>	<b>\$54,829</b>	<b>836</b>

Source: Chmura's JobsEQ.®

Occupation wages are as of 2025Q1 and represent the average for all covered employment.

## Region 1 Growth Strategies

GO Virginia Region 1's economic diversification strategies remain closely aligned with the statewide vision, while reflecting the unique momentum and evolving realities of Southwest Virginia. The 2025 update builds on a consistent strategic framework, sharpened by new opportunities and regional insights. At its core, the plan continues to prioritize three interconnected pillars:

- **Talent Development**
- **Sites and Infrastructure**
- **Innovation and Scale Up Support**

Together, these pillars form a forward-looking roadmap that balances ambition with practicality. They guide the Region 1 Council's priorities and serve as a foundation for cross-sector growth—supporting both legacy industries and emerging employers across the region.

While the region has made meaningful strides since the original 2017 Growth and Diversification Plan, persistent challenges remain. Population decline, limited educational attainment, and health disparities continue to constrain economic vitality. Yet this update is rooted in a clear-eyed understanding of current assets and informed by recent progress in building a more resilient and collaborative ecosystem.

The updated Southwest Virginia Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Study (2024) highlights meaningful improvements in regional connectivity, institutional support, and entrepreneurial infrastructure. Initiatives such as the hiring of a full-time ecosystem builder at UVA Wise, the emergence of startup-focused programming, and increased lending activity signal foundational progress. Yet, the region still lacks robust risk capital and remains under-connected to technical talent—critical gaps that must be addressed to catalyze high-growth sectors.

While this plan is not a comprehensive regional economic development strategy, it presents a focused blueprint to guide Region 1 Council funding decisions. It aims to leverage existing strengths, respond to structural shifts in the economy, and support scalable opportunities in sectors such as energy innovation, tourism, advanced manufacturing, and digital entrepreneurship.

## Talent Development

Developing a robust talent pipeline remains a cornerstone of Region 1's growth strategy. Alignment across all levels of education—from early childhood through post-secondary and workforce development—is essential to meeting the evolving needs of industry and supporting economic diversification.

Access to a skilled workforce is consistently cited as a top priority in regional economic development conversations. Strengthening the connection between educational programming and employer expectations will directly support both existing businesses and new industry entrants.

Region 1 is committed to investing in the continued alignment of educational infrastructure with the articulated needs of business and industry. The following strategies aim to enhance talent development and ensure that regional workforce initiatives are responsive, inclusive, and future-focused.

### 2025 Strategies for Talent Development

- Strategy 1:** Align education and training programs with needs and expectations of target industries; strengthen communication between educational providers and target industries; support the Talent Pathways Initiative focusing on Advanced Manufacturing and advance implementation strategies
- Strategy 2:** Build a strong pipeline of participants for programs (certifications, associates, bachelors and above) valued by the target market employers; promote career pathways to increase awareness of occupational, educational, and workforce opportunities available in the region
- Strategy 3:** Expand work-based learning experiences including internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job upskilling, and re-skilling programs
- Strategy 4:** Increase attainment of industry-recognized certifications, credentials, and degrees aligned with Region 1's target industries
- Strategy 5:** Elevate healthcare as a strategic workforce priority to strengthen pipelines in nursing, allied health, behavioral health, and related fields.

Focused attention on these strategies will directly support growth in Region 1's priority sectors. Several initiatives are already underway that exemplify this approach. One initiative is GO TEC (Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers), developed by the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) and coordinated in Region 1 by EO Companies, which serves as the regional liaison and coordinating entity for the GO TEC program in Southwest Virginia. GO TEC is a strategic talent pipeline initiative designed to introduce students to career pathways in advanced manufacturing and other target industries, beginning at the middle school level and continuing through dual enrollment, credentialing, and postsecondary training. Currently, GO TEC labs are active in 17 school buildings across Region 1.

In response to evolving regional needs and stakeholder input, the GO Virginia Region 1 Council has formally added Healthcare as a strategic focus within its Workforce Development framework. This decision reflects both the urgent demand for healthcare professionals across Southwest Virginia and the



sector’s potential to drive inclusive economic growth. Healthcare consistently ranks among the top employment sectors in the region, yet persistent workforce shortages—particularly in nursing, allied health, and behavioral health—pose significant challenges to service delivery and community well-being.

The Council's decision was informed by regional data, employer feedback, and alignment with state-level initiatives such as the JLARC Report on the GO Virginia program that was published in 2024. By elevating healthcare as a priority, Region 1 aims to strengthen educational and training pipelines, expand credentialing opportunities, and support career advancement within the sector. This strategy also complements broader efforts to retain young talent, improve health outcomes, and diversify the regional economy through high-demand, high-impact occupations. Healthcare’s inclusion as a workforce strategy underscores Region 1’s commitment to responsive planning and its recognition that economic vitality is deeply intertwined with community health and workforce resilience.

The [Southwest Virginia Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Analysis Update \(2024\)](#) further underscores the importance of talent development in fostering a resilient regional economy. The study highlights the need for stronger connections between technical talent and entrepreneurial ventures, as well as the importance of expanding access to workforce-aligned education and training. Addressing these gaps is critical to supporting high-growth sectors and ensuring that Southwest Virginia remains competitive in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

Although not an exhaustive list of potential GO Virginia fundable activities, the following chart contains examples of projects that support talent pipeline development in Region 1.

Potential Funding Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities which strengthen relationships and communication channels between educational entities and each target industry</li><li>• Activities which facilitate easy access to various programs such as establishing primary points of contact for coordinating workforce and economic development projects and assist businesses in navigating different programs – a champion to advocate for continuous alignment of programs with expressed needs</li><li>• Efforts to ensure pathways from various levels of educational programs to careers are clearly outlined and promoted</li><li>• Efforts which support innovative and flexible avenues for assisting existing training programs to recruit registrants helping to broaden mindsets to a variety of new employment cluster opportunities</li><li>• Initiatives which incentivize enrollment into programs identified as critical to the growth of existing businesses</li><li>• Activities which improve the region’s ratings as it relates to industry recognized credentials; build credentials and certifications that are transferable between industries and geographic areas</li><li>• Activities which create and promote meaningful internship and apprenticeship programs engaging youth from high school to college in target industries</li><li>• Initiatives which introduce the region’s youth to occupational career opportunities early – preferably in middle school</li><li>• Initiatives which educate career coaches, guidance counselors, parents and grandparents of occupational opportunities</li><li>• Initiatives which promote the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs</li></ul>

Projects that are eligible for GO Virginia funding will be measured using the Talent Development outcomes listed below.

Talent Development Outcomes / Impact Measures	
# of people trained	# of credentials awarded
# of job placements	# of new programs implemented
# of businesses served	# of students that completed dual enrollment programs
# of new interns placed	# of new apprenticeships created

### ACI Talent Pathway Initiative

In 2023, GO Virginia Region 1 launched the Southwest Virginia Manufacturing Talent Pathways Initiative, led by the Appalachian Council for Innovation (ACI) in partnership with GENEDGE, SVAM, Virginia Career Works, and regional workforce development boards. This initiative was designed to assess and strengthen the workforce pipeline for small to mid-size manufacturers across the region. Through a series of business and education roundtables, followed by joint strategy sessions, nearly 100 stakeholders collaborated to identify key challenges and propose actionable solutions. The full report, included in the appendix, provides a comprehensive analysis of workforce gaps and outlines strategic recommendations to improve talent alignment in advanced manufacturing.

The findings of the initiative revealed five critical areas impacting workforce readiness: communication skills, technical skills, thinking skills, student attitudes, and broader social factors. Employers and educators expressed both shared concerns and notable disconnects—particularly around expectations for new hires and the effectiveness of current training programs. Recommendations included early exposure to manufacturing careers, improved two-way communication between industry and education, integration of soft skills and critical thinking into curricula, and targeted marketing to reshape perceptions of manufacturing jobs. The report emphasizes the importance of collaboration, exposure, and sustained engagement to build a talent pipeline that meets the evolving needs of Southwest Virginia's manufacturing sector.

The study can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

## Sites & Infrastructure

Investing in development-ready industrial and technology sites remains a top priority for GO Virginia Region 1. These sites, certified and tiered for target industries, are crucial for attracting new businesses and supporting the growth of existing ones. Since the original Growth and Diversification Plan, Region 1 has made significant progress in site preparedness, utilizing tools like the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) Site Characterization Study and the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) to steer strategic investments.

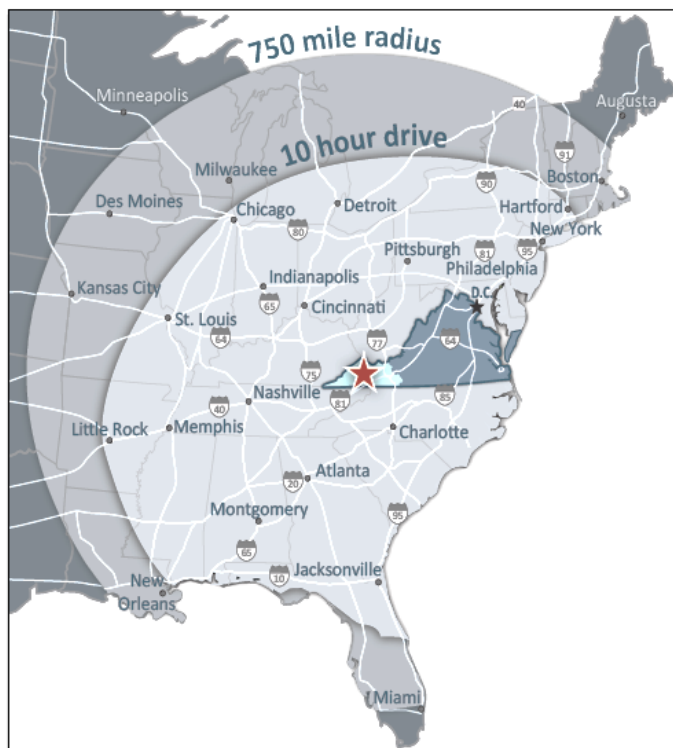
Region 1's geographic location remains a competitive advantage. With access to 14 state capitals within 500 miles and proximity to major North-South and East-West transportation corridors, Southwest Virginia is well-placed to serve both eastern and midwestern markets. The region's closeness to North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia further boosts its logistical appeal.

GO Virginia Region 1 has experienced robust prospect activity over the past several years, with a mix of successful project landings and disengaged opportunities. According to VEDP data for GOVA Region 1, the region saw 34 projects marked as "Closed/Won," representing successful business attraction or expansion efforts. These wins span sectors including advanced manufacturing, food and beverage processing, and information technology, and collectively account for over \$1.2 billion in investment and more than 3,800 new jobs.

However, the data also shows that over the same timeframe, 465 prospects were categorized as either "Closed/Lost" or "Closed/Prospect Disengaged," indicating projects that did not materialize in the region. These disengaged or lost opportunities reflect the competitive nature of site selection and underscore the importance of continued investment in site readiness, workforce development, and regional collaboration.

This mix of outcomes highlights both the potential and the challenges facing Region 1. The data provides a valuable lens for evaluating strategic priorities and identifying areas where targeted interventions—such as infrastructure improvements or talent pipeline initiatives—could improve conversion rates and long-term economic impact.

The 2025 update also highlights a growing focus on infrastructure that promotes innovation and sustainability. As shown in the Southwest Virginia Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Study Update (2024), the region is considering transformative opportunities like repurposing reclaimed mine lands and developing Small Modular Reactor (SMR) sites. These efforts indicate a move toward future-oriented industrial growth that builds on existing technical skills and natural resources.



## 2025 Strategies for Sites & Infrastructure

- Strategy 1:** Advance certification and tier ranking of existing and new sites for targeted industries. Fully leverage VEDP's Site Characterization and the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) to prioritize high-impact investments
- Strategy 2:** Support broadband infrastructure expansion to ensure competitiveness and enable innovation across industrial and technology sites
- Strategy 3:** Strengthen and utilize Regional Industrial Facility Authorities (RIFAs) to develop larger, shared industrial sites that attract target industries and enable regional revenue-sharing opportunities

These strategies lay a foundation for growth across all five of Region 1's targeted industries. The region is committed to leveraging its comparative advantages—especially in energy, timber, and advanced manufacturing—to build scalable, future-ready infrastructure.

The following chart highlights a few examples of potential GO Virginia fundable projects which will aid in the effort to enhance the supply of industrial and technology sites available for economic development purposes.

Potential Funding Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inventory and assess industrial and technology parks, identifying infrastructure needs based on target industry benchmarks</li><li>• Support certification of industrial parks for specific industry targets</li><li>• Encourage collaboration for joint site development and shared revenue models</li><li>• Leverage tools such as Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, Hub Zones, HB222, and the Collaborative Jobs Act</li><li>• Upgrade and maintain utilities, including broadband, at industrial and technology sites</li><li>• Strengthen existing and newly formed RIFAs to facilitate regional park development and revenue-sharing agreements</li></ul>

GO Virginia funds can be used for both regional site planning and site development implementation. Planning funds should start due diligence or help sites move through lower tiers (1–3) of the VBRSP scoring system. Implementation funds should assist sites in reaching Tier 4 or 5 or improve their marketability and readiness for capital investment and job creation.

GO Virginia may also support regional broadband planning and middle-mile infrastructure projects, such as fiber and conduit extensions, in partnership with the private sector, with a focus on meeting business needs.

Projects that are eligible for GO Virginia funding will be measured using the following Sites and Infrastructure outcomes listed below.

Sites & Infrastructure Outcomes / Impact Measures	
# of acres advanced to higher tier per Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP)	# of linear feet of sewer infrastructure
For sites not advancing to a higher tier, # of acres impacted/developed	# of linear feet of water infrastructure
# of increased locality engagement in establishing a Regional Industrial Facility Authority (RIFA)/revenue sharing agreement	# of linear feet of gas infrastructure
# of miles of middle mile broadband completed	

## VEDP Site Characterization

In 2019, Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) collaborated with stakeholders across the Commonwealth to evaluate the readiness of 466 industrial sites, including 21 sites within GO Virginia Region 1. The VEDP Site Characterization process evaluated each property using a 5-level tiered system to show the degree of readiness for economic development.

The characterization produced a report for each site that includes the following:

- Summary of the site including site attributes integral to development and selection
- Current Tier Level (1-5) to provide a rating for site readiness
- List of items and next steps to advance tier levels and cost estimates for each step
- Site diagram with the potential build-out of the site

The following map was updated by VEDP in the fall of 2025 and displays 36 available sites in Region 1 that qualify for the characterization study, including their current Tier Level. The map includes labels for sites over 25 acres. It is advised that GO Virginia sites projects have 25+ contiguous acres.

Wildwood Commerce Park and Project Intersection Business and Technology Park are the only Tier 5 sites in Region 1. Four full sites or industrial parks within the region are characterized as Tier 4: Bluestone Regional Business and Technology Center, Lonesome Pine Business and Technology Park, Pathway Park, and Oak Park Center for Business and Industry. Additionally, lot 1 of Progress Park has been characterized as Tier 4, but the industrial site as a whole is characterized as a Tier 2. The Region 1 Council has invested in four projects related to the VBRSP; these include Wildwood Commerce Park, Project Intersection, Pathway Park, and Wythe County Progress Park. Summaries of these projects can be found in the appendix.

The sites readiness scoring system, along with a prioritization process guided by VEDP and aligned with the region's Growth and Diversification Plan, should serve as a guide to site investments by GO Virginia. Likewise, GO Virginia site development projects should be aligned with the Virginia Collaborative Economic Development Act, wherever possible.

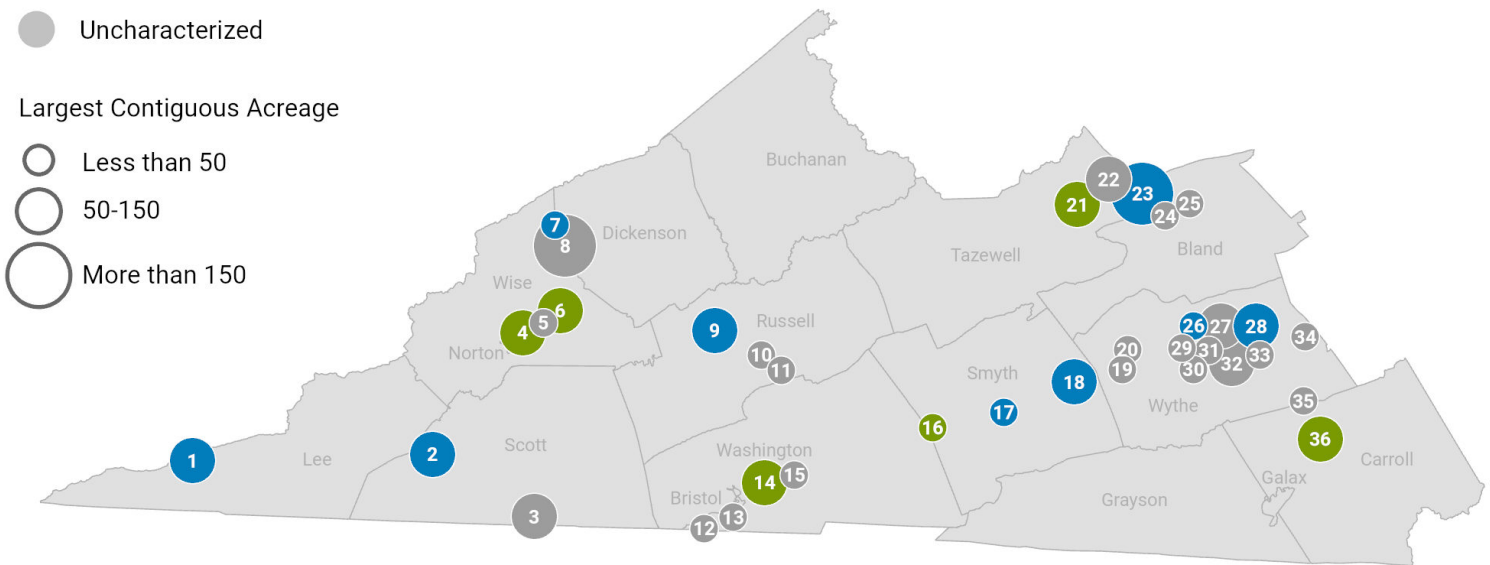
## VEDP Site Characterization Map

### Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) Characterization Status

- Tier 4-5 (Certified)
- Tier 1-3
- Uncharacterized

### Largest Contiguous Acreage

- Less than 50
- 50-150
- More than 150



### Available Properties

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park                | 19 Crisp Site                                      |
| 2 Scott County Regional Business and Technology Park | 20 Mabry Site                                      |
| 3 Riverside Development                              | 21 Bluestone Regional Business & Technology Center |
| 4 Project Intersection Business and Industry Park    | 22 Richwood Properties, Inc.                       |
| 5 Bear Creek Business Park                           | 23 Leatherwood Site                                |
| 6 Lonesome Pine Business and Technology Park         | 24 Bland County Commerce Park                      |
| 7 Red Onion Industrial Park                          | 25 Bastian Industrial Park                         |
| 8 Chip Mill Site                                     | 26 I-81 Campbell Site                              |
| 9 Russell County Industrial Complex                  | 27 Spraker Site                                    |
| 10 Russell Regional Business Technology Park         | 28 Wythe County Progress Park                      |
| 11 Cumberland Plateau Regional Industrial Park       | 29 South 6th Street #1                             |
| 12 Bob Morrison Site                                 | 30 South 6th Street #2                             |
| 13 White Site-Bonham Road                            | 31 Main & Chapman                                  |
| 14 Oak Park Center For Business and Industry         | 32 Community Boulevard Site                        |
| 15 Stone Mill Business and Technology Park           | 33 I-81 Davis Site                                 |
| 16 Pathway Park                                      | 34 I-81 Molloy Site                                |
| 17 Hull Property                                     | 35 Old 52 Road Site                                |
| 18 Former Brick Plant                                | 36 Wildwood Commerce Park                          |

## Innovation & Scale Up Support

GO Virginia Region 1 continues to prioritize building a resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports the creation, growth, and scalability of new and existing businesses. Small and emerging firms remain a vital source of job creation, innovation, and productivity growth in Southwest Virginia. Their success is essential to diversifying the regional economy and fostering long-term resilience.

Recent data and stakeholder interviews confirm that entrepreneurial activity in Region 1 is evolving. While new business formation has not surged, job creation by small businesses remains strong. In the third quarter of 2024, small companies (fewer than 20 employees) contributed 36.9% of total job creation in Region 1—above the state average of 33.6%. This trend underscores the importance of continued investment in entrepreneurship and innovation.

The region has made meaningful progress since the launch of the Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth and Economic Prosperity and the establishment of Opportunity SWVA, a network of entrepreneurial support organizations. The Region 1 Council has supported these efforts through the Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative (REI), which led to the implementation of SWVA Startup, coordinated by UVA Wise.

The Southwest Virginia Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Study Update (2024) highlights several key developments:

- UVA Wise hired a full-time ecosystem builder, strengthening regional coordination and programming.
- New activities such as CreatorCon, Co.Starters, and Side Hustle Market have emerged, increasing connectivity and visibility.
- Lending activity has increased, with over \$71 million in SBA 7(a) loans issued since 2020, signaling growth among expanding small businesses.
- However, the region remains under-connected to technical talent and lacks early-stage risk capital—critical gaps for scaling high-growth ventures.

## 2025 Strategies for Innovation and Scale Up Support

- Strategy 1:** Advance implementation of Opportunity SWVA as the region's coordinating entity for entrepreneurship. Focus on high-growth company development, ecosystem connectivity, and capital access
- Strategy 2:** Expand innovation and entrepreneurship programming across all levels of the educational infrastructure, including K–12, postsecondary, and workforce development
- Strategy 3:** Support entrepreneurs and existing businesses in target industries through product and market development, access to capital, and mentorship networks

These strategies support all five GO Virginia Region 1 target industries. While lifestyle businesses have seen growth, scalable ventures remain limited. Addressing this requires targeted capital strategies, such as forming an angel investment group and expanding non-dilutive grant programs. The study recommends launching a small angel group with a \$3,000 buy-in and hosting startup weekends or pitch competitions to attract talent and catalyze investment.



Initiatives like the Hatch Accelerator, The Gauntlet business competition, and CreatorCon have engaged over 36 businesses and drawn regional attention. These programs, along with physical spaces like The Nest and the Oxbow Center, provide platforms for collaboration, education, and visibility.

To build on this momentum, Region 1 must continue fostering a culture of innovation, storytelling, and connectivity. This includes expanding mentorship networks, increasing access to SBIR/STTR grants, and supporting intrapreneurship within existing firms. Examples of activities and initiatives which support the development of the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem in Region 1 are included in the following chart.

Potential Funding Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs to accelerate product, service, and market development for existing businesses</li> <li>• Supply chain analysis and market expansion for local agricultural assets</li> <li>• Outreach to educate businesses on leveraging HUB Zones, Opportunity Zones, and other incentives</li> <li>• Activities to increase R&amp;D, including SBIR/STTR grant support</li> <li>• Development of intrapreneurship programs within growing companies</li> <li>• Establishment of accelerator and incubator programs</li> <li>• Mentorship and peer-to-peer networks for entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Business-to-business relationship-building initiatives</li> <li>• K-12 entrepreneurship education programs</li> <li>• Tech transfer and commercialization of university discoveries</li> </ul>	

Projects that are eligible for GO Virginia funding will be measured using the Innovation & Scale Up Support outcomes listed below.

Innovation & Scale Up Support Outcomes / Impact Measures	
# of jobs created	Total funds raised by businesses served
# of existing businesses expanded	# of patents filed
# of new businesses created	# of patents awarded
# of businesses served	# of new products released to production
# of new mentors providing business assistance	

## Other Regional Strategies

GO Virginia Region 1's core priorities remain focused on supporting five targeted industry sectors through talent pipeline development, site and infrastructure readiness, and ecosystem-building for innovation and entrepreneurship. GO Virginia funds are directed toward activities that advance these goals. However, the broader landscape of Southwest Virginia offers additional opportunities and challenges that shape the region's economic trajectory and influence workforce participation.

Access to housing, childcare, and healthcare has emerged as a critical enabler of workforce development and regional competitiveness. Across Region 1, employers and community leaders consistently cite these factors as barriers to recruitment, retention, and economic mobility. The Region 1 Council recognizes that while these areas may fall outside the direct scope of GO Virginia funding, they are essential to sustaining a productive workforce and supporting industry growth. Collaborative efforts are underway to expand early learning and childcare facilities, improve healthcare access—including behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment—and explore housing solutions that meet the needs of working families and young professionals.

The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the strategic importance of domestic pharmaceutical and biotech manufacturing. With Region 1's proximity to the biotech cluster in Charlottesville, there is growing interest in exploring opportunities in pharmaceutical production, medical equipment manufacturing, and related supply chain activities. These sectors may warrant further analysis and consideration in future plan updates as the region evaluates its capacity to support emerging industries.

Additionally, Southwest Virginia continues to benefit from investments in outdoor recreation and tourism assets, which have significantly boosted regional visibility and revenue. While tourism-related initiatives are not currently eligible for GO Virginia Region 1 funding, the Council acknowledges the sector's contribution to quality of life, placemaking, and talent attraction. Economic developers have expressed interest in attracting manufacturers and service providers that support outdoor recreation—such as gear production, specialty foods, and hospitality technologies—which may align with GO Virginia's criteria and represent a promising area for future project development.

Together, these complementary strategies reflect Region 1's holistic approach to economic diversification—one that integrates infrastructure, workforce, and quality-of-life investments to build a resilient and opportunity-rich future for Southwest Virginia.

# REGION 1 PROJECTS OVERVIEW

## GO Virginia Region 1 Implementation Activity

Since the Region 1 Growth & Diversification Plan was released in August 2017, the Region 1 Council has successfully awarded 39 GO Virginia Per Capita grants, totaling \$7,224,312. Of the 39 projects, fourteen implementation projects have been awarded \$5,371,676 and twenty-five planning projects have been awarded \$1,852,636. These projects have leveraged over \$5.2 million in non-state investment, with the exception of Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission monies. The projects have committed over \$1 million in local match provided by local governments in Region 1. The remainder of the match has been sourced from the private sector, non-profits, and federal funds.

In addition to Per Capita grant awards, Region 1 has collaborated on multiple statewide competitive grants. In 2019, Region 1 partnered with Region Three (lead region) on a GO Virginia Competitive grant awarded \$4.8 million, with \$1.3 million in initial funding. The GO-TEC Phase II project specifically involves participation from Wytheville Community College (WCC) and the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe and Smyth as well as the city of Galax. Continuing with the expansion of the GO-TEC program, Region 1 partnered with Regions 3, 4 and 5 on GO TEC Virginia 2025, which was awarded \$3,474,821. Led by the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, the project establishes an in-region coordinating entity in each collaborating region and develops a GO TEC Training lab in each region to serve as a focal point for regional economic developers to showcase the GO TEC talent pathways and hands-on technology integration that create a pipeline of skilled workers.

The GO Virginia State Board authorized the use of \$14.66M in statewide competitive funds to respond to the unprecedented economic conditions facing Virginia due to the immediate and long-term effects of the coronavirus on regional economies. This initiative focused resources on economic resilience and recovery while staying true to the GO Virginia mission. Region 1 funded a total of five Economic Resilience and Recovery (ERR) projects totaling \$638,927. These projects leveraged \$323,509 in non-state investment.

Region 1 served as the lead on one Statewide Competitive ERR project and had the collaboration from all nine GO Virginia regions. The project, Retooling Virginia's Manufacturers for Strategic Industries, was executed by GENEDGE and was funded in the amount of \$2,950,000, with \$1,475,000 in leveraged funding. Region 1 also collaborated on a Competitive ERR project with Region 7 as the lead. The Expansion of ICAP Mentor Network project was awarded \$882,794 in Statewide Competitive ERR funds.

The 2022 General Assembly provided \$2.5 million to the GO Virginia State Board for Talent Pathway Initiative (TPI) planning grants to support analysis of the workforce needs of regional businesses and the identification of the skills and training that can help prepare Virginians to fill available jobs in regional markets. Appalachian Council for Innovation was appointed the Region 1 TPI Coordinating Entity and was awarded \$250,000. Over a two-year grant period, Appalachian Council for Innovation, with GENEDGE as the lead partner, conducted a situational analysis and developed a regional talent pathway strategy to support the workforce needs of Advanced Manufacturing throughout Region 1 localities.

In 2025, the GO Virginia State Board authorized the use of \$1.5M from the GO Virginia Competitive Fund (FY25) to respond to the unprecedented economic conditions facing Virginia due to the near and long term effects of Hurricane Helene on GO Virginia Regions 1, 2, and 3 which include localities designated by FEMA (Virginia Tropical Storm Helene (DR-4831)). This program would help regions build capacity to support and serve existing businesses, priority traded sectors and essential businesses, including the healthcare system and its supply chain during recovery from this natural disaster. Region 1 has funded one Helene Business Recovery Initiative (HBRI) project totaling \$97,500. This project leveraged \$48,750 in non-state investment.

All of the thirteen counties and three cities in Region 1 are or have been impacted by at least one approved project and 100% of the counties and cities are actively participating in or have participated in at least one project.

All of the higher education institutions in Region 1, including the universities and community colleges, have supported or participated in at least one approved grant project. In addition, over 75 regional businesses have engaged in at least one approved grant project.

Region 1 funded four planning projects that led to GO Virginia funded implementation projects.

The following tables list the Per Capita, Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI), Statewide Competitive, ERR, HBRI, and Competitive ERR grant awards for Region 1 projects. Complete summaries for each project may be found in the appendix under Region 1 Approved Projects. Applications and supporting documents for each project can be found on the Region 1 website at [www.goswva.org](http://www.goswva.org).

Region 1 Per Capita Grant Awards				
Project	Description	Industry Target	GO VA Funds	Matching Funds
<b>Ignite Internships</b> United Way of Southwest Virginia	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$250,000	\$618,482
<b>SWVA Hub Link</b> Southwest Virginia Technology Council	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Information Technology	\$27,547.19	\$27,637.20
<b>Coal to Graphene Market Study</b> Virginia Tech	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Energy & Minerals	\$25,000	\$25,000
<b>Smart Farming at the Center for Workforce and Innovation for Appalachia</b> Mountain Empire Community College	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development Innovation & Scale Up Support	Information Technology Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$310,372	\$380,500
<b>Lonesome Pine RIFA Coordinator</b> LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>The Solar Jobs, Manufacturing and Utility-Scale Investment Playbook for Far Southwest Virginia</b> Appalachian Voices	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Energy & Minerals	\$70,947	\$70,947
<b>Project Oasis</b> InvestSWVA	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Energy & Minerals	\$50,000	\$50,000

<b>Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative</b> The University of Virginia's College at Wise/Opportunity SWVA	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$80,000	\$40,000
<b>SWVA Agribusiness Opportunities Project Manager</b> Virginia Tech: Virginia Cooperative Extension	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$100,000	\$100,000
<b>Project Energizer</b> LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Energy & Minerals	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>Project Innovation</b> LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Energy & Minerals	\$100,000	\$150,000
<b>Project Intersection</b> LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	<b>Implementation</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$485,000	\$1,417,400
<b>Digital Workforce Development</b> William King Museum of Art	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Information Technology	\$70,910	\$75,735
<b>Ignite Tech Talent Phase I Discovery</b> United Way of Southwest Virginia	<b>Planning</b> Talent Development	Information Technology	\$251,960	\$251,961
<b>Wildwood Natural Gas Extension</b> Blueridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority	<b>Implementation</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$527,600	\$320,684
<b>Energy Storage &amp; Electrification Manufacturing Jobs</b> Appalachian Voices	<b>Implementation</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing Energy & Minerals	\$486,366	\$245,000
<b>Project Fuse</b> Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Information Technology	\$70,000	\$35,000
<b>Project Thoroughbred</b> InvestSWVA	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$100,000	\$100,000
<b>SWVA Startup</b> The University of Virginia's College at Wise	<b>Implementation</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$290,850	\$145,425
<b>GROWTH: The Business of Agriculture in SWVA</b> Emory & Henry College	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$52,950	\$26,500
<b>Project Veer</b> InvestSWVA	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing Energy & Minerals	\$49,750	\$24,875
<b>Mobilizing the Supply Chain for Critical Infrastructure</b> Appalachian Sustainable Development	<b>Implementation</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$212,200	\$106,624
<b>Pathway Park Infrastructure Improvements</b> Smyth County Economic Development Authority	<b>Implementation</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$600,000	\$300,000
<b>GO TEC Region 1</b> Carroll County Public Schools	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$308,924	\$154,462
<b>Gupton Initiative</b> The Virginia College Fund (Region 3)	<b>Planning</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology	\$10,000	\$10,000

<b>Make it Here!</b> Mount Rogers Regional Partnership	<b>Planning</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing	\$90,000	\$45,000
<b>SMR Site Feasibility</b> LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Energy & Minerals	\$100,000	\$50,000
<b>SMR Supply Chain Analysis</b> LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing	\$50,000	\$25,000
<b>Virtual Reality for Training &amp; Career Exploration</b> Mount Rogers Regional Partnership	<b>Planning</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$50,000	\$25,000
<b>GO TEC Expansion</b> United Way of Southwest Virginia	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$600,055	\$366,845
<b>Agricultural Campus Site Development Plan</b> Appalachian Sustainable Development	<b>Planning</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$25,000	\$25,000
<b>Mount Rogers Regional Site Selection, Identification &amp; Evaluation</b> Mount Rogers Regional Partnership	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing Logistics, Transportation & Warehousing	\$100,000	\$50,000
<b>WiseLink Coalfield Transformation Project</b> Wise County, VA	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Information Technology Energy & Minerals	\$99,481.70	\$55,639
<b>GO TEC Expansion 2</b> EO Companies	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$491,196.82	\$496,871.03
<b>Progress Park Lot 10 Site Development</b> Joint IDA of Wythe County	<b>Implementation</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Information Technology Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$425,876	\$213,000
<b>Wildwood Commerce Site 1 Due Diligence &amp; Design Services</b> Blueridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority	<b>Planning</b> Site & Infrastructure	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing Logistics, Transportation & Warehousing	\$100,000	\$50,000
<b>Middle School Energy Education Academy Pilot Study</b> Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation	<b>Planning</b> Talent Development	Energy & Minerals	\$52,500	\$26,250
<b>Electrical Engineering Modernization Initiative</b> Virginia Highlands Community College	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing Logistics, Transportation & Warehousing	\$312,326	\$156,163
<b>Microreactor Feasibility Study</b> Wise County, VA	<b>Planning</b> Sites & Infrastructure	Energy & Minerals	\$97,500	\$50,000

Region 1 Talent Pathway Initiative (TPI) Award				
Project	Description	Industry Target	GO VA Funds	Matching Funds
<b>Talent Pathways Initiative</b> Appalachian Council for Innovation	<b>Planning</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing	\$250,000	\$125,000

Region 1 Competitive Grant Awards				
Project	Collaborating Region	Industry Target	GO VA Funds	Matching Funds
<b>GO-TEC Phase II</b> Danville Community College	<b>Regions 1 &amp; 3</b> (Region 3 Primary)	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology	\$4,896,528	\$4,915,962
<b>GO-TEC 2025</b> Institute for Advanced Learning & Research	<b>Regions 1, 3, 4, &amp; 5</b> (Region 3 Primary)	Talent Development	\$3,474,821	\$2,426,079

Region 1 Economic Resilience & Recovery Grant Awards				
Project	Description	Industry Target	GO VA Funds	Matching Funds
<b>Perseverance</b> Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance (Mount Rogers Regional Partnership)	<b>Fast Access</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing	\$100,000	\$52,500
<b>Farmer Pipeline: Maintaining the Supply Chain by Growing Farmers</b> Appalachian Sustainable Development	<b>Fast Access</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$99,996	\$51,076
<b>COVID-19 Business Continuity &amp; Resiliency</b> Appalachian Council for Innovation	<b>Fast Access</b> Innovation & Scale Up Support	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing	\$68,500	\$34,500
<b>Employer Sponsored Childcare Benefit</b> United Way of Southwest Virginia	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing	\$269,406	\$134,703
<b>Project WELD</b> Mountain Empire Community College	<b>Implementation</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing	\$101,025	\$50,730

Region 1 Competitive Economic Resilience & Recovery Grant Awards				
Project	Collaborating Regions	Strategy	GO VA Funds	Leveraged Funds
<b>Retooling Virginia's Manufacturers for Strategic Industries</b> GENEDGE	<b>Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, &amp; 9</b> (Region 1 Primary)	Innovation & Scale Up Support	\$2,950,000	\$1,475,000
<b>Expansion of ICAP Mentor Network</b> George Mason University Virginia SBDC	<b>Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, &amp; 9</b> (Region 7 Primary)	Innovation & Scale Up Support	\$882,794	\$441,415

Region 1 Helene Business Recovery Initiative Grant Awards				
Project	Description	Industry Target	GO VA Funds	Matching Funds
<b>VA Small Business Recovery Web Portal</b> PBS Appalachia	<b>HBRI</b> Talent Development	Advanced Manufacturing Information Technology Energy & Minerals Food/Beverage Manufacturing Logistics, Transportation & Warehousing	\$97,500	\$48,750



## GO Virginia Region 1 Target Industry Investments

*\*Some projects impact multiple targeted industries*

Project Name	Project Type	Advanced Manufacturing	Agriculture and Food & Beverage Manufacturing	Energy and Minerals	Information Technology	Logistics, Transportation and Warehousing
Appalachian Council for Innovation: COVID-19 Business Continuity & Resiliency	ERR – Fast Access	X	X	X	X	
Appalachian Council for Innovation: Talent Pathways Initiative	Talent Pathways Initiative	X				
Appalachian Sustainable Development: Farmer Pipeline	ERR – Fast Access		X			
Appalachian Sustainable Development: Agricultural Campus Site Development Plan	Planning		X			
Appalachian Sustainable Development: Mobilizing the Supply Chain for Critical Infrastructure	Implementation		X			
Appalachian Voices: Energy Storage & Electrification Manufacturing Jobs	Implementation	X		X		
Appalachian Voices: Solar Playbook	Planning			X		
Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority: Wildwood Natural Gas Extension	Implementation	X	X	X	X	
Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority: Wildwood Commerce Site 1 Due Diligence and Design Services	Planning	X	X	X	X	X
Carroll County Public Schools: GO TEC Region 1	Implementation	X	X	X	X	
Emory & Henry College: GROW(TH) The Business of Agriculture in Southwest Virginia	Planning		X			

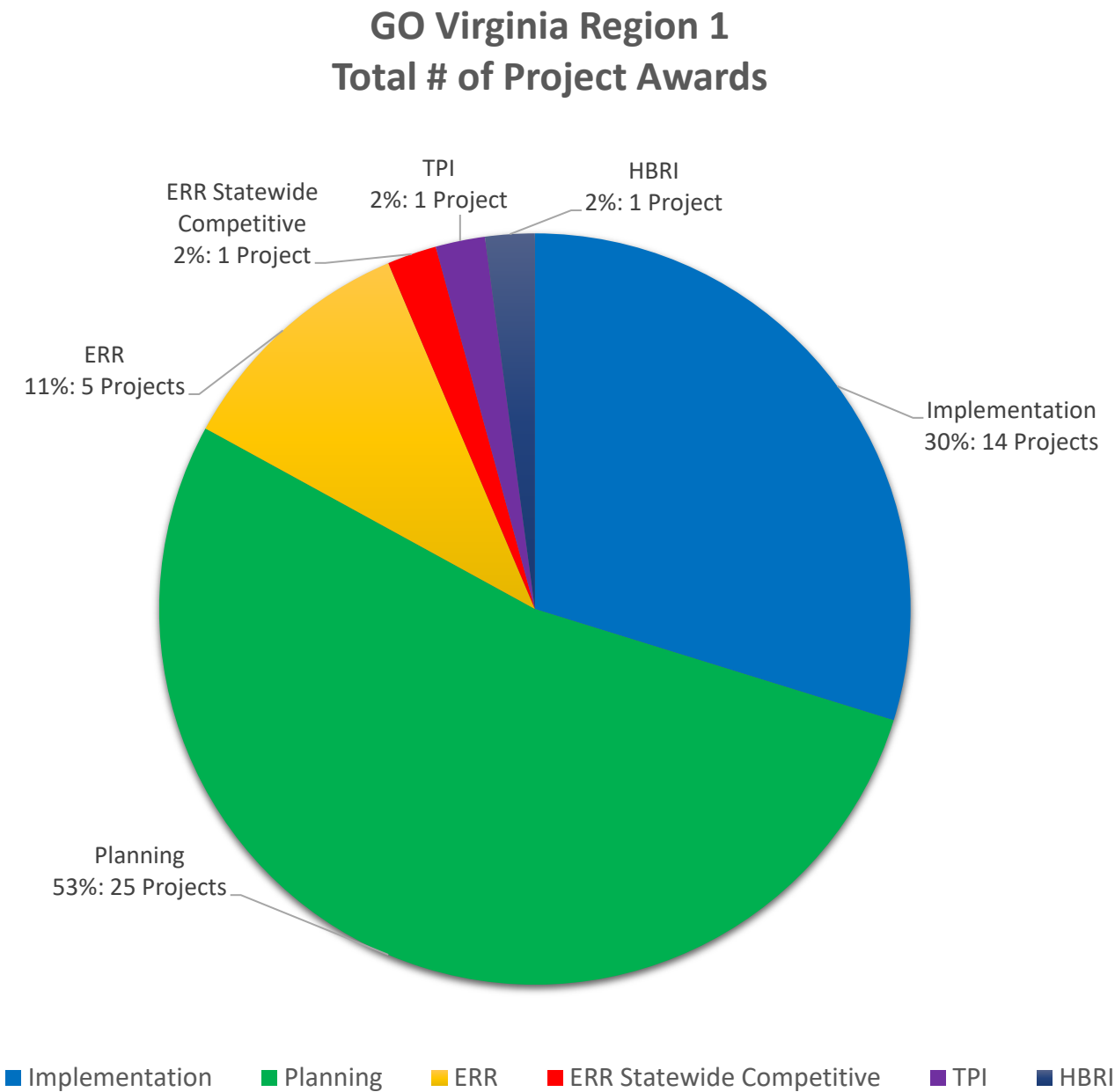
Project Name	Project Type	Advanced Manufacturing	Agriculture and Food & Beverage Manufacturing	Energy and Minerals	Information Technology	Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing
EO Companies: GO TEC Expansion 2	Implementation	X	X		X	
GENEDGE: Retooling Virginia's Manufacturers to Strategic Industries	ERR – Statewide Competitive	X				
InvestSWVA: Project Oasis	Planning			X		
InvestSWVA: Project Thoroughbred	Planning		X			
InvestSWVA: Project Veer	Planning	X		X		
Joint IDA of Wythe County: Progress Park Lot 10 Site Development	Implementation		X		X	
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Lonesome Pine Regional Facilities Authority (RIFA) Coordinator	Planning	X	X	X	X	
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Project Energizer	Planning			X		
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Project Innovation	Planning			X		
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: SMR Site Feasibility	Planning	X		X		
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: SMR Supply Chain Analysis	Planning	X				
Lonesome Pine RIFA: Project Fuse	Planning	X	X	X	X	
Lonesome Pine RIFA: Project Intersection	Implementation	X	X	X	X	
Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Virtual Reality for Career Exploration	Planning	X	X	X	X	
Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Make it Here	Planning	X				
Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Mount Rogers Site Selection, Identification, & Evaluation	Planning	X	X	X	X	X

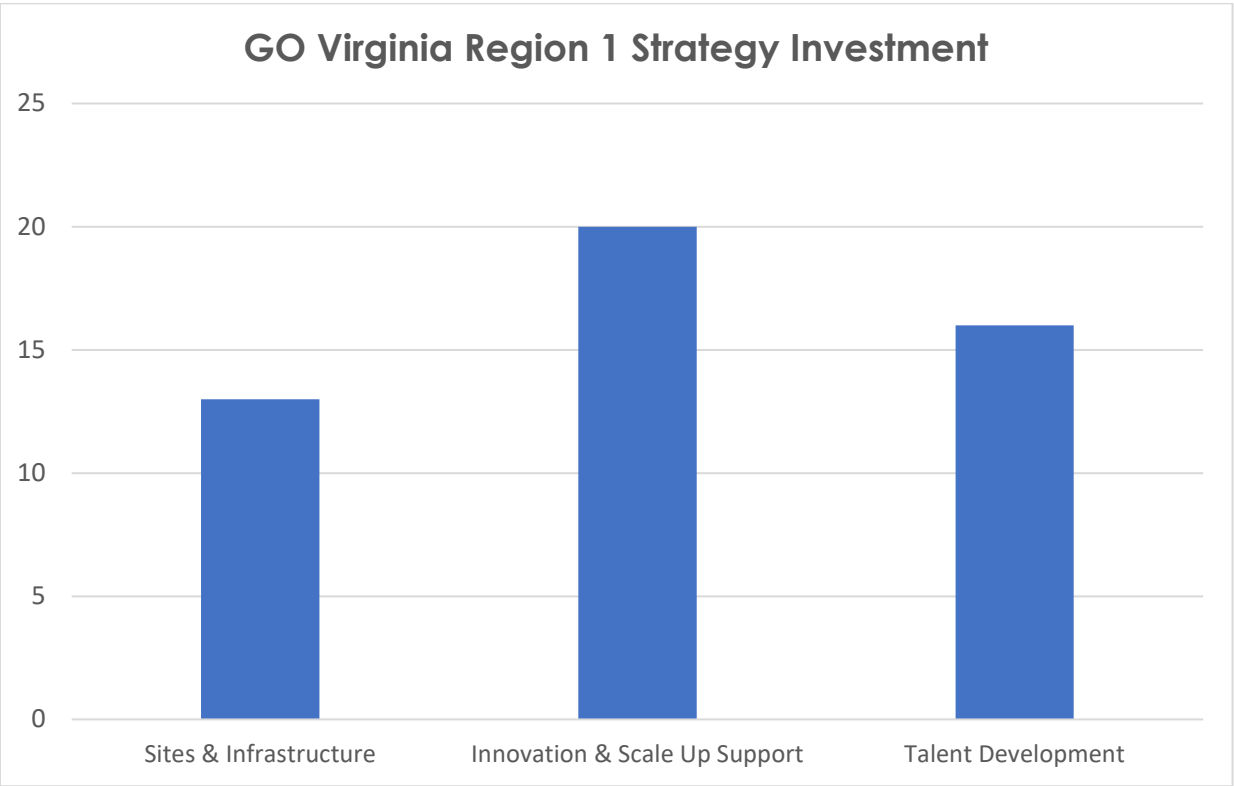
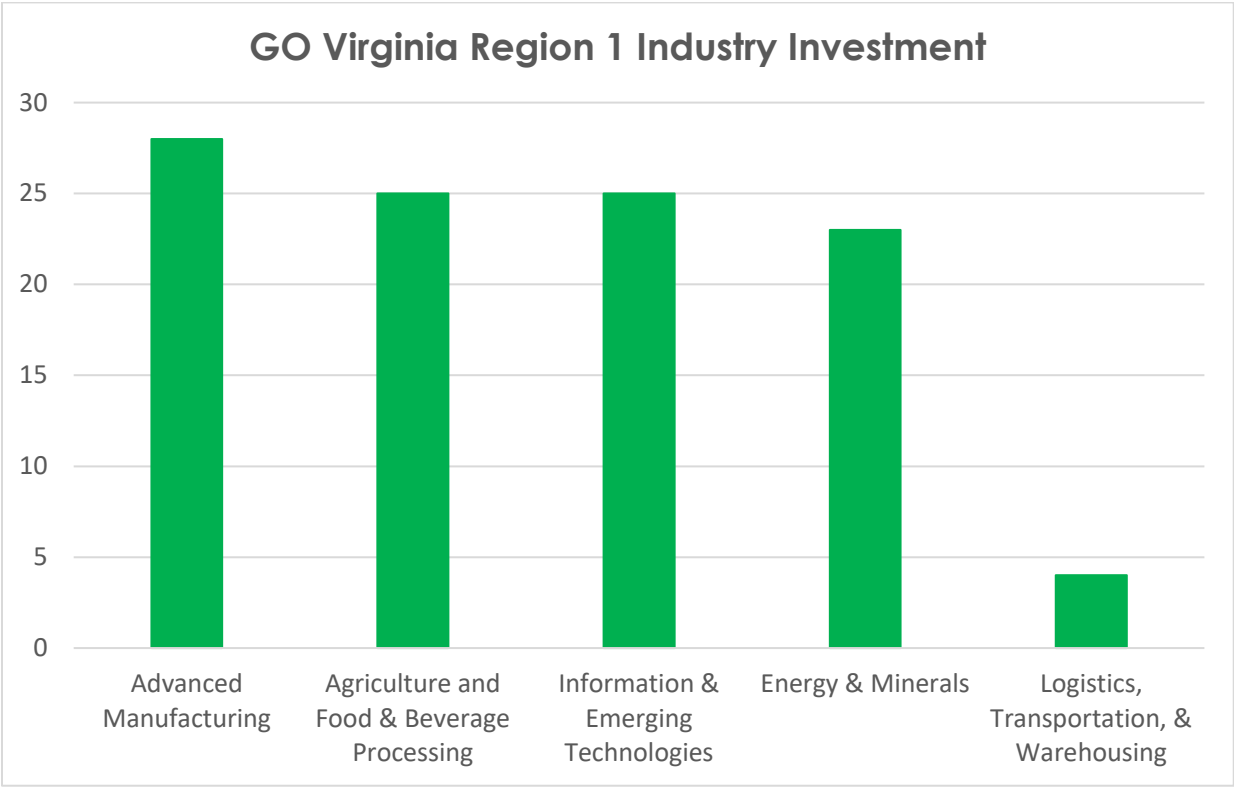
Project Name	Project Type	Advanced Manufacturing	Agriculture and Food & Beverage Manufacturing	Energy and Minerals	Information Technology	Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing
Mountain Empire Community College: Project WELD	ERR – Implementation	X				
Mountain Empire Community College: Smart Farming at the Center for Workforce & Innovation of Appalachia	Implementation		X		X	
PBS Appalachia: VA Small Business Disaster Response Portal	HBRI	X	X	X	X	X
Smyth County Economic Development Authority: Pathway Park Infrastructure Improvements	Implementation	X	X	X	X	
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation: Middle School Energy Education Academy	Planning			X		
Southwest Virginia Technology Council: SWVA Hub Link	Planning				X	
The University of Virginia's College at Wise/Opportunity SWVA: Regional Ecosystem Initiative (REI)	Planning	X	X	X	X	
The University of Virginia's College at Wise: SWVA Startup	Implementation	X	X	X	X	
The Virginia College Fund: Gupton Initiative	Planning	X			X	
United Way of SWVA: Employer Sponsored Childcare Benefit	ERR - Implementation	X				
United Way of SWVA: GO TEC Expansion	Implementation	X	X		X	
United Way of SWVA: Ignite Tech Talent	Implementation	X	X	X	X	
United Way of SWVA: Ignite Tech Talent Phase 1 Discovery	Planning				X	

Project Name	Project Type	Advanced Manufacturing	Agriculture and Food & Beverage Manufacturing	Energy and Minerals	Information Technology	Logistics, Transportation, and Warehousing
Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance (MRRP): Perseverance	ERR-Fast Access	X				
Virginia Highlands Community College: Electrical Technology Program Modernization Initiative	Implementation	X	X	X	X	X
Virginia Tech: Coal to Graphene Market Study	Planning			X		
Virginia Tech Virginia Cooperative Extension: SWVA Agriculture Opportunities Project Manager	Planning		X			
William King Museum of Art: Digital Workforce Development	Implementation				X	
Wise County, VA: WiseLink Coalfield Transformation Project	Planning			X	X	
Wise County, VA: Microreactor Feasibility Study	Planning			X		

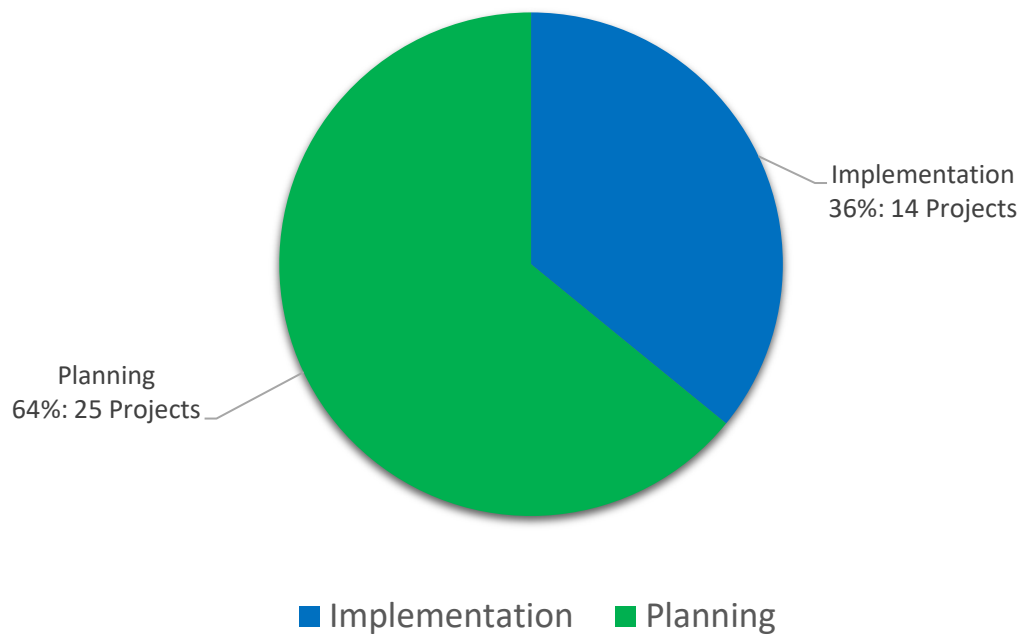
# GO Virginia Region 1 Investments

The graphs below display the GO Virginia Region 1 Council investments since 2017. This graph only includes awards made to Region 1 in which Region 1 served as the lead.

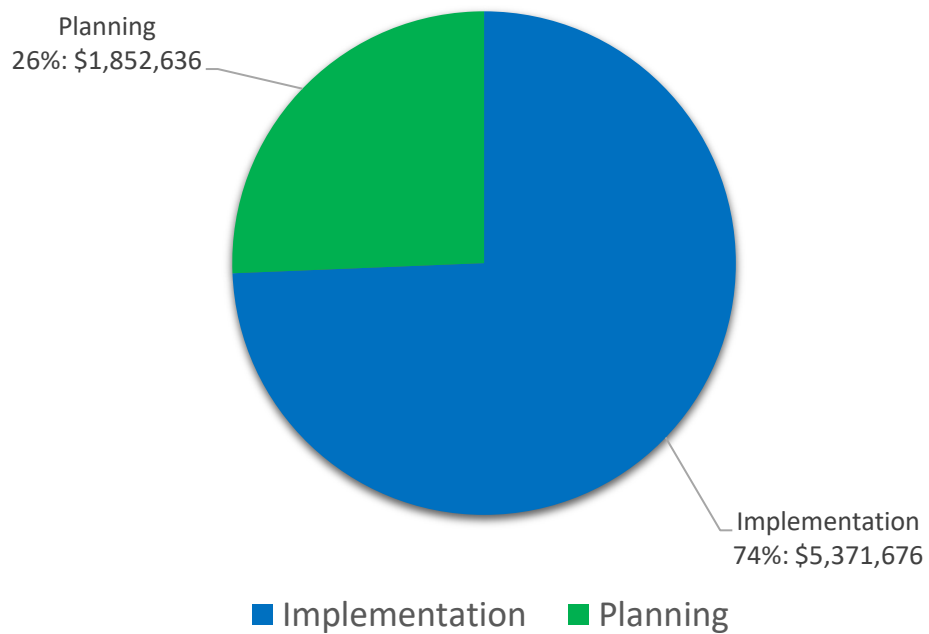




### GO Virginia Region 1 Total # of Per Capita Awards by Project Type



### GO Virginia Region 1 Total Per Capita Award Investment by Project Type





## Process for Apply for GO Virginia Funding

The Region 1 Council established an application review process which helps guide the applicants through project concept to project application. Applicants are encouraged to follow a six-step process for submitting a GO Virginia Region 1 application. The first step involves reaching out to the Region 1 Support Organization staff to discuss the project. The earlier an applicant engages the Region 1 Council with a project, the earlier they can access the technical assistance needed to help strengthen their application. Secondly, applicants should review this growth and diversification plan in order to gauge how a project may fit into Region 1 priorities. The next steps are to identify which targeted industry cluster(s) will be impacted by the project and how the project addresses a specific need for that cluster(s), as well as to identify the program development strategy that the project aligns with. Next is to determine the appropriate application to be filled out in order to complete the last step for completion and submission of the application.

Region 1 has an open application window where projects received at established application deadlines prior to GO Virginia Region 1 Council meetings (held four times per year), will be reviewed and submitted for council consideration. During the review process, Region 1 support staff conducts an internal review, providing feedback to the applicants to further develop the application submission. As additional information is added to the application, the support staff engages a review committee comprised of Region 1 Council Members as well as subject matter experts (SME) related to the industry or field relevant to the application in order to assist with the review process. Support staff also begins the process of review with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) support staff to identify any issues, red flags, or opportunities with each application before the full Region 1 Council considers the project.

Once feedback has been received from SMEs, regional council review team members, and DHCD, Region 1 support staff shares the application documents with a recommendation to the Region 1 Council. The Council makes decisions to recommend the project for State Board approval, continue refining the project, or decline the project. If recommended for funding, Region 1 support staff will submit the project to DHCD via an online portal and work with DHCD staff and the applicant to address additional questions or concerns that may arise during the state's review process.

Applications for statewide competitive funds must be approved by all regional councils collaborating on the project prior to consideration at the state board.

The GO Virginia State Board meets four times per year and has the approval authority for all GO Virginia grant funded projects. DHCD has the ability to administratively approve Planning projects, which are projects requesting \$100,000 or less.

Guidelines for applying for GO Virginia funding from both the per capita and competitive funds may be found at [www.goswva.org/apply](http://www.goswva.org/apply). These guidelines are updated routinely as the GO Virginia State Board makes policy adjustments. Eligible projects must align with the goals and strategies of GO Virginia, involve broad regional collaboration, and focus on the target industries included in this growth and diversification plan.

Additional guidance documents from the state board may be found on [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/gova](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/gova).

## Project Monitoring, Data Tracking, and Benchmarking

The goals of GO Virginia are to create high-wage jobs and promote regional collaboration. In monitoring the progress made toward achieving these goals, each funded project will be evaluated according to the proposed milestones and core outcomes. If a project is awarded funding, outcomes of the project will be formalized in the contract between DHCD, the support organization (UVA Wise), and the subgrantee. Subgrantees are required to track specific and measurable outcomes that demonstrate how the funds granted are achieving the goals of the region's growth and diversification plan. GO Virginia provides a list of core grant outcomes intended for GO Virginia funding. Project teams may choose to track project-specific metrics beyond GO Virginia core grant outcomes, but those project-specific metrics are tracked in addition to the core grant outcomes. Outcomes are emphasized through the entire process, from application to award to closeout. Implementation projects are required to submit the [GO Virginia Core Outcomes](#) form with the application.

Subgrantees provide quarterly reports, which provide an opportunity for the project team to report on milestones, achieved outcomes, and barriers the project may be facing. The GO Virginia Region 1 support staff provides technical assistance to subgrantees to help ensure projects stay on track and that challenges are addressed as early as possible. Region 1 support staff hold regularly scheduled, virtual meetings with all active subgrantees to share GO Virginia updates and allow the subgrantees to share project progress and connect with the other regional projects.

Subgrantees are encouraged to submit quarterly reimbursement requests based upon project expenses. Reimbursement requests must include appropriate documentation of GO Virginia expenses and match funding dollars. A thorough review of reimbursement requests is conducted by Region 1 support staff prior to the disbursement of funds.

At the end of a grant period, project closeout procedures provide the final opportunity to report on cumulative grant outcomes. Subgrantees are required to submit a financial closeout report and a performance closeout report.

## Project Sustainability and Potential Match

The GO Virginia Region 1 Council is sensitive to the sustainability of projects when funding decisions are made. GO Virginia resources can be used as a catalyst to start conversations amongst regional stakeholders, but to also support viable projects already on the radar screen of partners. However, sustainability of projects as well as gathering the required match for a project can be challenging for the jurisdictions of the region.

GO Virginia projects should demonstrate sustainability after GO Virginia funds are exhausted. Projects that demonstrate the ability to sustain the region's capacity to continue the project will be most successful. Projects that reflect a short-term solution that is financially or functionally unsustainable will be viewed less favorably. Furthermore, projects that can be sustained through non-State resources are preferred to those creating new or expanded obligations for the State.

GO Virginia projects require that any grant awarded must have matching funds equal to or greater than half of the grant amount. Local, regional, federal, or private funds can serve as matching funds, but state general or non-general funds cannot be included.

GO Virginia projects require the participation of two or more localities, and implementation projects necessitate that partnering localities contribute 20% of the total match, either in cash or in kind. If localities wish to request a waiver for the local match, they should follow the Match Waiver Administrative Guidance provided by DHCD.

For different GO Virginia funding categories, specific match requirements apply. All projects require a 2:1 match. Along with a 2:1 match, project Implementation initiatives including Sites Implementation and Broadband Implementation require 20% of the total match contributed by partnering localities. The Statewide Competitive category requires a 2:1 match with a 20% local match requirement.

Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC) funds may no longer be applied as matching funds for GO Virginia projects as State Board Policy 12 that permitted use of these funds as matching funds is now expired.

For detailed information about various types of match, documentation requirements, and specific conditions and restrictions, please refer to the GO Virginia Match Guidelines. The GO Virginia Region 1 Council remains committed to fostering project sustainability and exploring opportunities to address funding challenges in collaboration with regional planning districts and strategic funders.

# APPENDIX

## Table of Contents

[APPENDIX 1: Healthcare Gaps in GO Virginia Region 1 Report.....](#)[86](#)

[APPENDIX 2: SWVA Healthcare Occupations in Virginia's 2024 High Demand Occupations List.....](#)[103](#)

[APPENDIX 3: GO Virginia Regional Partners .....](#)[104](#)

[APPENDIX 4: Region One Approved Projects.....](#)[109](#)

[APPENDIX 5: Revision Log.....](#)[129](#)



## Appendix 1: Healthcare Gaps in GO Virginia Region 1

PREPARED FOR

**GO Virginia Region 1**



10/22/2025

# Healthcare Gaps in GO Virginia Region 1



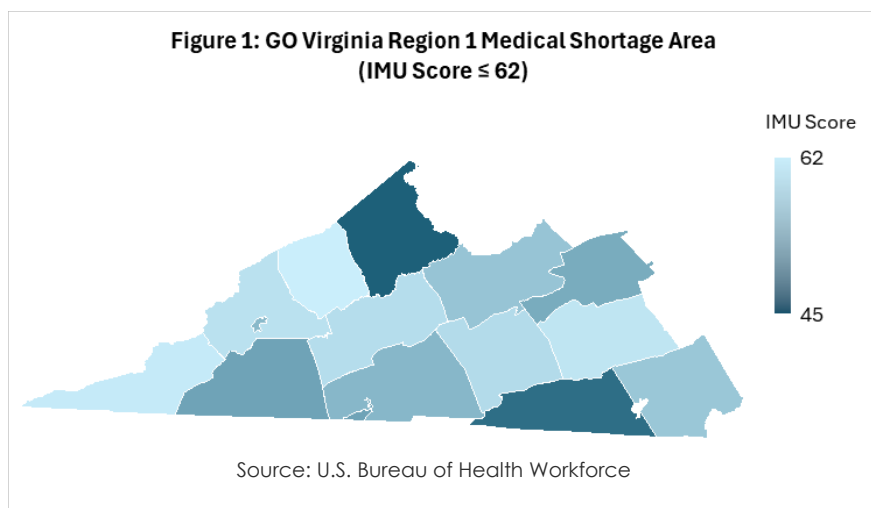
## Summary: Healthcare in the GO Virginia 1 Region

*This analysis suggests that strengthening healthcare in GO Virginia Region 1 can play a meaningful role in supporting broader economic development goals. The region faces persistent gaps in healthcare access—particularly in primary care, emergency services, and specialty providers—that may limit workforce participation and deter business investment. Key clusters in the region have a higher incidence of workplace injury than the average. Healthcare employment has not yet fully recovered from pandemic-era declines, and many occupations are projected to experience labor supply deficits over the next decade. The data indicate that improved access to care could help address labor market challenges, support existing industries, and enhance the region's economic resilience. As such, targeted investments in healthcare infrastructure and workforce development may complement other strategies aimed at strengthening the region's economy.*

## Healthcare in the GO Virginia 1 Region

Access to quality healthcare within a reasonable distance is an important consideration in economic development. Anecdotally, stakeholders in GO VA 1 report firms have decided not to relocate or expand in the GO VA 1 region because of a lack of good health care, including long wait times and lack of specialists. Chmura's analysis focuses on identifying healthcare workforce demand, gaps, and strategies that ultimately can support targeted sectors.

Every county in the GO Virginia 1 Region is medically underserved per the U.S. Bureau of Health Workforce (IMU score  $\leq 62$ )<sup>21</sup>, characterized by lack of access to primary care services. Figure 1 below shows the counties with the lowest IMU scores in dark blue, indicating areas of greatest need for improved medical services. The medical care shortage in the area is widespread across the healthcare and social assistance sector as well as the healthcare occupation cluster.



<sup>21</sup> Index of Medical Underservice (IMU) includes four components: providers per 1,000 population ratio, percent of population at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, percent of population age 65 and over, and infant mortality rate. A medically underserved area or population is designated by an IMU score less than or equal to 62.

## Importance of Health Care Access to Regional Economic Development

A growing body of research highlights the central role of healthcare access in shaping workforce participation and economic outcomes in rural Appalachia. Literature from government agencies, academic studies, and regional organizations reveals a clear connection between limited healthcare services and reduced labor force engagement, productivity, and regional economic resilience.

Counties designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas have sparse access to primary care, limited preventive services, and declining hospital availability. This results in higher rates of chronic illness and disability, undermining labor force participation and economic vitality. Without accessible care, residents often delay treatment, exacerbating health conditions that reduce employability.<sup>22</sup>

Hospital closures lead to a measurable decline in the local workforce and population, as workers relocate or drop out of employment due to unmet medical needs. In one study, counties that experienced rural hospital closures saw a 1.4% decrease in labor force size and a 1.1% population decline compared to similar counties.<sup>23</sup>

Substance use disorders also significantly reduce workforce availability and hinder employer recruitment, particularly in manufacturing and mining sectors.<sup>24</sup> Employers frequently cite difficulty recruiting and retaining drug-free, work-ready employees as high rates of drug use and untreated health conditions make it difficult for them to fill physically demanding jobs.<sup>25</sup>

The literature strongly supports the conclusion that healthcare access is foundational to economic development in rural areas. Across numerous studies, researchers and agencies converge on the idea that addressing care shortages supports increased workforce participation, stabilizes communities, and enables long-term regional growth.

## Access to General Hospital Care

There are 13 general hospitals in the GO Virginia 1 Region, but four counties in the region are not being served by a general hospital: Bland County, Carroll County, Scott County, and Grayson County. Additionally, over the past five years, one hospital closed in the region. Mountain View Regional Hospital in Norton, VA was first repurposed from an acute facility to a specialized nursing facility in 2020. In 2023, it was permanently closed as operations were consolidated with Norton Community Hospital two miles away, also in Norton, VA. Lee County Community Hospital, which was originally closed in 2013, reopened in 2021, adding 10 additional beds to the Southwest Virginia region. Figure 2 below shows the location of general hospitals within the region.

---

<sup>22</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission. *Access in Appalachia: A Primer*. 2020.

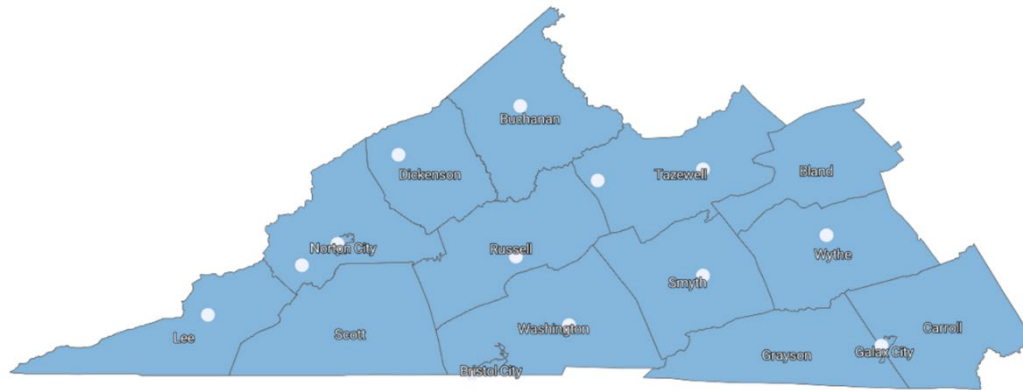
<sup>23</sup>Health Services Research. "The Economic Effects of Rural Hospital Closures." 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission. *Health Disparities Related to Opioid Misuse in Appalachia*. April 2019.

<sup>25</sup> National Association of Counties (NACo). *Opioids in Appalachia*. 2019.



**Figure 2: GO Virginia Region 1 General**



Source: Virginia Department of Health

Despite the reopening of the community hospital in Lee County, hospital employment in the region has declined over the past five years. In the fourth quarter of 2019 (2019Q4), hospitals employed 4,083 workers. By 2023Q4, employment in hospitals had declined 11.0% to 3,633. Since then, hospital employment rebounded 5.1% to 3,820 but remains 263 employees below its 2019Q4 level. Overall, hospital employment decreased 6.4% since 2019Q4, at a 1.3% average annual rate.

### **Access to Behavioral Health Care**

Recent developments suggest that improvements are being made in behavioral health access in the GO Virginia 1 Region. These include a planned women's substance abuse facility in the former location of Mountain View Regional Hospital in Norton, VA and an expansion to Ridgeview Pavillion in Bristol, VA which is due to open in 2026.<sup>26</sup> Employment in offices of mental health practitioners has increased at an average annual rate of 24.3% over the past five years, reaching 140 as of the first quarter of 2025.

### **Access to Primary Care**

Employment in primary care medical occupations<sup>27</sup> has declined in the region over the past five years. In 2024Q4, there were 104 family medicine physicians, down from 114 in 2019Q4. Additionally, there were only 28 general internal medicine physicians in the region, unchanged from five years prior. This lack of access to primary care may be a significant barrier to employers and workers considering moving to the area and wondering where they and their families will be able to find health care.

<sup>26</sup> <https://cardinalnews.org/2025/07/15/new-recovery-programs-in-southwest-virginia-will-help-mothers-stay-with-their-children-during-addiction-treatment/>; <https://www.balladhealth.org/news/crisis-center-behavioral-health>

<sup>27</sup> Employment by occupation data are estimates derived from the Chmura Industry/Occupation Matrix and industry employment data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Organizations with 501(c)(3) status are not included in QCEW, however, we estimate positions at these organizations amount to only about 0.3% of the employment in the region.

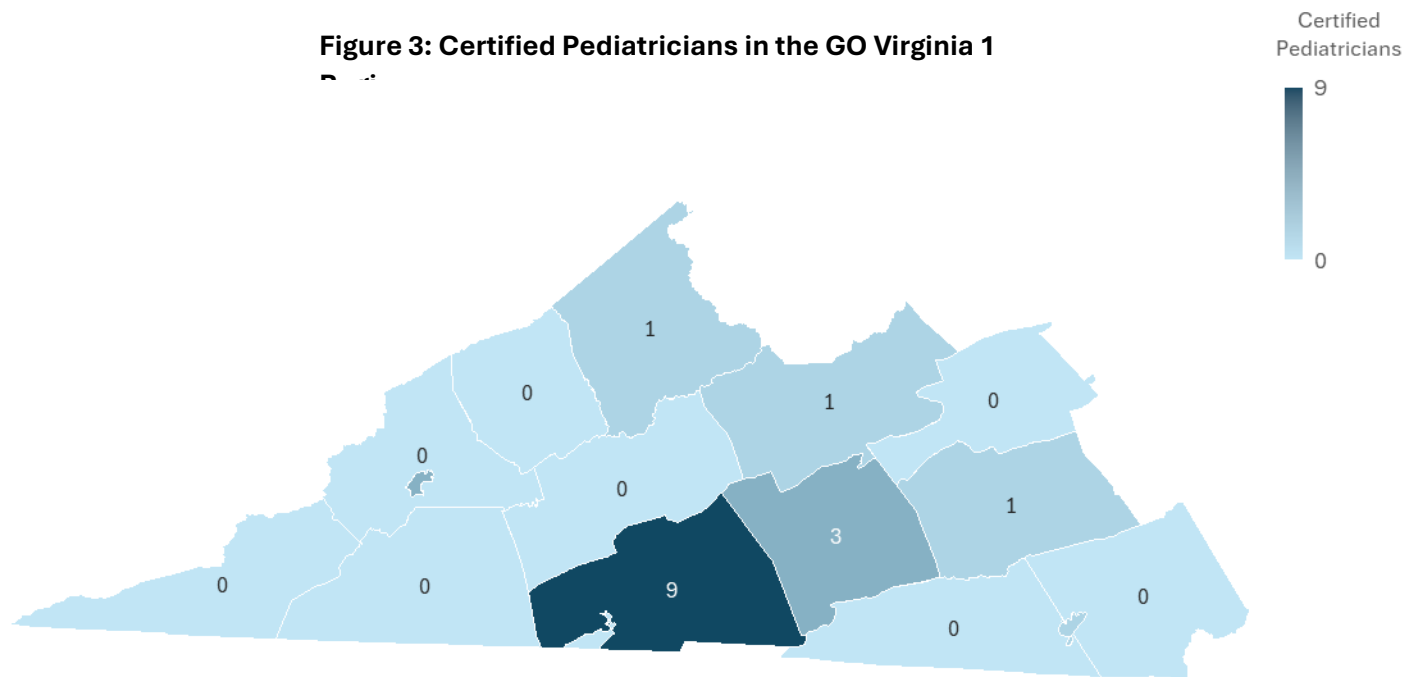
**Table 1: Occupation Snapshot, Physicians in GO Virginia 1**

		Four Quarters Ending 2024Q4		5-Year History	
SOC	Occupation	Empl.	Mean Ann Wages	Empl Change.	Ann %
29-1229	Physicians, All Other	215	\$219,500	16	1.6%
29-1215	Family Medicine Physicians	104	\$281,900	-10	-1.8%
29-1214	Emergency Medicine Physicians	35	\$299,400	2	1.1%
29-1211	Anesthesiologists	30	\$237,700	-5	-2.9%
29-1221	Pediatricians, General	29	\$168,600	-2	-1.3%
29-1216	General Internal Medicine Physicians	28	\$227,400	-1	-0.5%
29-1223	Psychiatrists	25	\$230,000	-2	-1.2%
29-1224	Radiologists	25	\$313,500	2	1.3%
29-1218	Obstetricians and Gynecologists	15	\$284,600	-2	-2.6%
29-1212	Cardiologists	14	\$368,400	0	0.1%
29-1213	Dermatologists	8	\$292,700	1	2.4%
29-1217	Neurologists	8	\$240,500	1	2.4%
29-1222	Physicians, Pathologists	2	\$231,700	0	0.8%
<b>29-1210</b>	<b>Physicians (Total)</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>\$247,500</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Source: JobsEQ® by Chmura

The number of pediatricians working in the GO Virginia 1 Region has been in decline since 2016. In 2016Q3, there were 34 pediatricians in the region, but as of 2024Q4 there were only 29. JobsEQ estimates that two counties in the region, Dickenson County and Grayson County, lacked any pediatricians in the entire county. According to the American Board of Pediatrics, however, 8 of the 16 counties and cities in the region had no certified pediatricians in 2024.

**Figure 3: Certified Pediatricians in the GO Virginia 1**



Source: American Board of Pediatrics

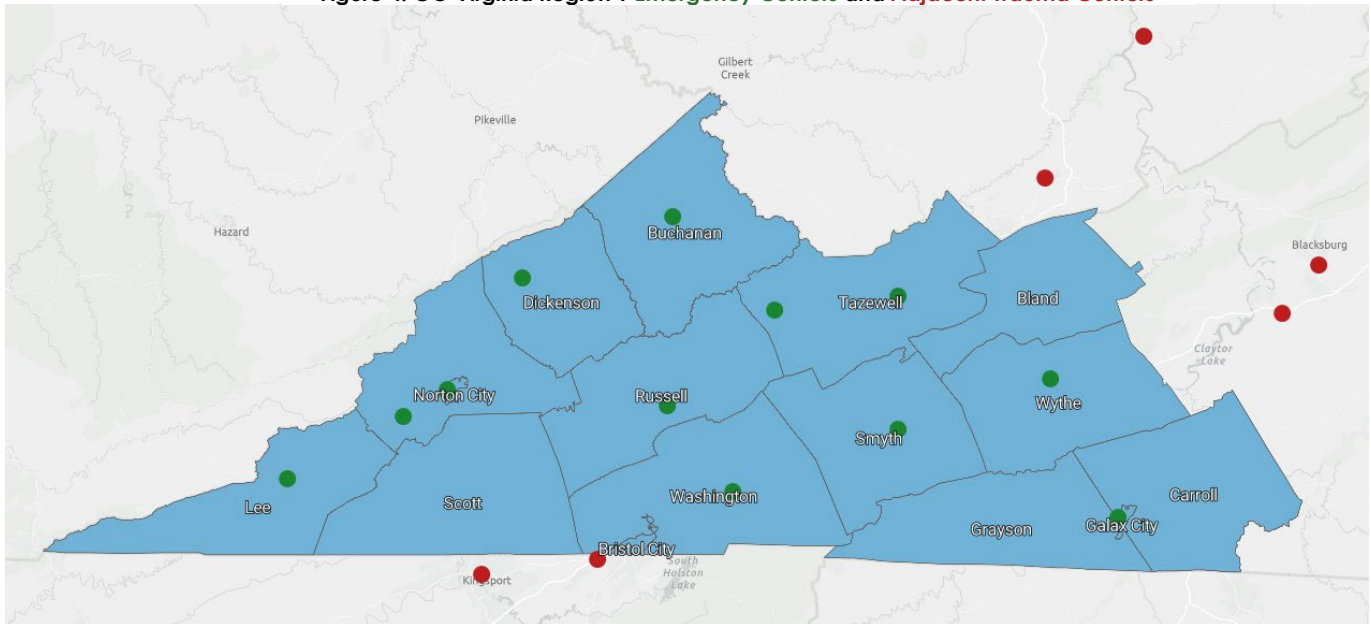
The number of obstetricians and gynecologists has been declining since 2017Q1, from 19 to 15 in 2024Q4. Additionally, JobsEQ estimates that five counties in the region lacked an OB/GYN, specifically Bland County, Buchanan County, Dickenson County, Grayson County, and the City of Bristol.

In order to address the shortages in primary care access in Southwest Virginia, there are initiatives to expand telehealth services in the region. With expanded telehealth access, patients can avoid long commutes and wait times to see their providers for non-emergency appointments. Telehealth is particularly useful in the management of chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, that do not require in-person visits but do require updates and medication management. As broadband internet access expands in the region, telehealth will continue to play a pivotal role in improving access and healthcare outcomes for residents.

### Access to Emergency and Trauma Care

In addition to limited access to primary care services, the GO Virginia 1 region lacks access to trauma care, which is focused on treating severe acute injuries that require immediate attention such as those from traffic accidents. This is in contrast to emergency departments which can typically treat acute medical conditions such as heart attacks or strokes which require immediate medical attention. There are no trauma centers within the region, and the majority of the region is a 60+ minute drive to the nearest trauma center. The map below shows the location of trauma centers and emergency centers in and around the region.

**Figure 4: GO Virginia Region 1 Emergency Centers and Adjacent Trauma Centers**



Source: Virginia Health Information, Trauma Center Association of America, JobsEQ® by Chmura

Access to trauma care is particularly important as many of the most concentrated industries in the region are comparatively more dangerous than average. In 2023, the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry, which has a regional location quotient of 2.29, had an occupational injury rate of 4.0 cases per 100 full-time workers in the United States. This is almost twice the national total industry rate of 2.2 cases per 100 full-time workers. Coal mining, with a regional location quotient of 68.84, had an occupational injury rate of 2.9 cases per 100 full-time workers, and manufacturing, with a location quotient of 1.58, had an occupational injury rate of 2.6 cases per 100 full-time workers. Transportation and warehousing, a growing targeted sector, had 4.3 cases per 100 full-time workers.

Although some of the region is within a 60-minute drive to trauma centers in Tennessee and West Virginia, the majority of the GO Virginia 1 region is over an hour away from the nearest trauma center, with the closest Virginia trauma center in Christiansburg. Additionally, there is significant overlap between trauma center service areas. While this clustering provides choices of care to the counties and municipalities near Tennessee's trauma centers or the eastern counties served by Interstates 81 and 77, it leaves other areas, including almost the entirety of Lee and Grayson counties, without access.

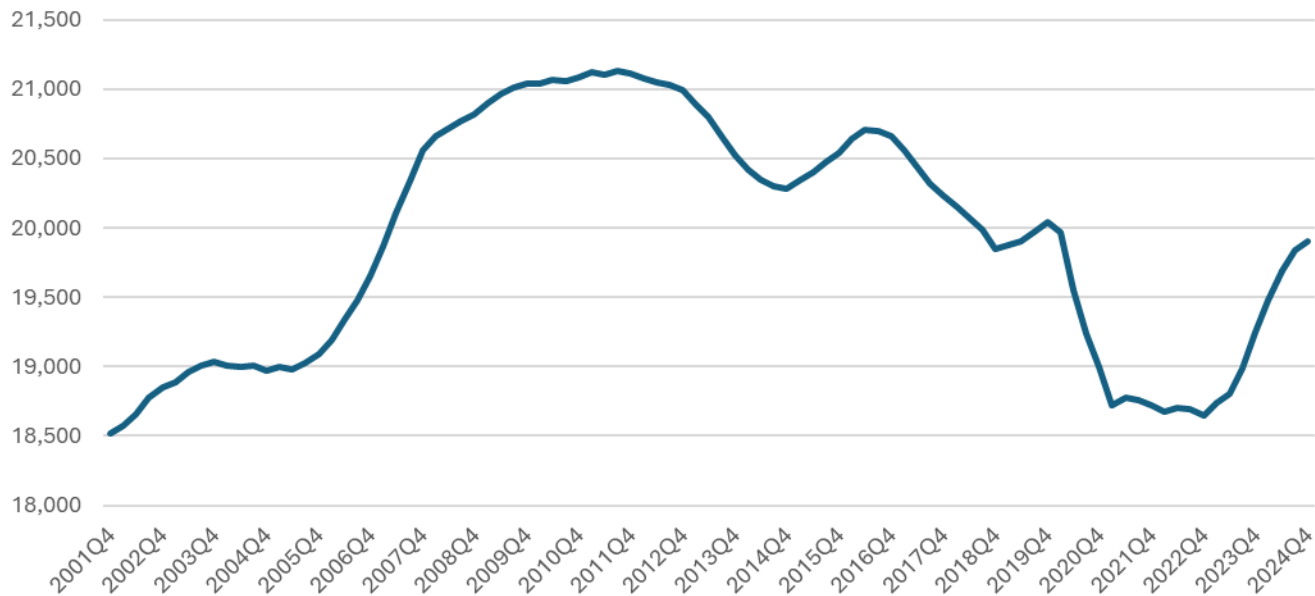
Emergency care, which is care focused on a broader range of medical emergencies that may or may not require immediate attention such as infections or heart attacks, has greater access in the GO Virginia 1 region, with the majority of the region being served by an emergency department. Regional employment of emergency medical technicians and paramedics, however, has been steadily declining since 2016Q4. At the peak in 2016, there were 574 emergency medical technicians and paramedics in the region, but by 2024Q4, that number dropped 22% to 448. As of 2024Q4, there were 35 emergency medical physicians in the entire region.

### Industry Trends

The healthcare and social assistance sector in GO Virginia 1 has not returned to its pre-pandemic level, even as the healthcare employment in the labor shed has steadily expanded. Employment in the GO Virginia 1 Region healthcare and social assistance sector saw a sharp increase between 2001Q4 and its peak at 21,131 in 2011Q3. Between 2011Q3 and 2019Q4, employment in the healthcare sector dropped

to 20,041. Healthcare employment plunged during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, falling to 18,643 before recovering to its 2024Q4 level, 19,907. Despite rising after the trough in 2022Q4, healthcare employment is still below its pre-pandemic level and down 135 over the past five years.

**Figure 5: Employment in the Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector in the GO Virginia 1 Region**



In contrast, the healthcare sector in the GO Virginia 1 labor shed<sup>28</sup> saw a steady improvement between 2001Q4 and 2019Q4 where it peaked at 93,490. Despite a pandemic-related drop in 2020 and 2021, healthcare employment in the labor shed had recovered to 96,221 in 2024Q4 and is up 2,731 over the past four years.

As shown in Table 2 below, 10 of the 18 industries in the healthcare and social assistance sector lost employment over the past five years, with five industries in the sector losing more than 100 employees. These include:

- Vocational rehabilitation services (-162)
- Psychiatric and substance abuse hospitals (-153)
- Offices of physicians (-128)
- Other ambulatory health care services (-103)
- Residential intellectual and developmental disability, mental health, and substance abuse facility (-103)

<sup>28</sup> The GO Virginia 1 labor shed is defined by counties and cities which are in commutable distance to the GO Virginia 1 region. The labor shed includes all counties in the GO Virginia 1 region with the addition of: City of Roanoke, VA; City of Salem, VA; Hawkins County, TN; Mercer County, WV; Montgomery County, VA; Pike County, KY; Pulaski County, VA; Radford City, VA; Roanoke County, VA; Sullivan County, TN; Surry County, NC; and Washington County, TN.

On the other side, four industries in the healthcare and social assistance sector added more than 100 employees over the past five years:

- Outpatient care centers (+226)
- Offices of other health practitioners (+217)
- Nursing care facilities (skilled nursing facilities) (+171)
- Community food and housing, and emergency and other relief services (+105)

Sizeable increases in these industries over the past five years have not been enough to make up for the employment losses in the healthcare sector as healthcare accessibility in the region continues to deteriorate.

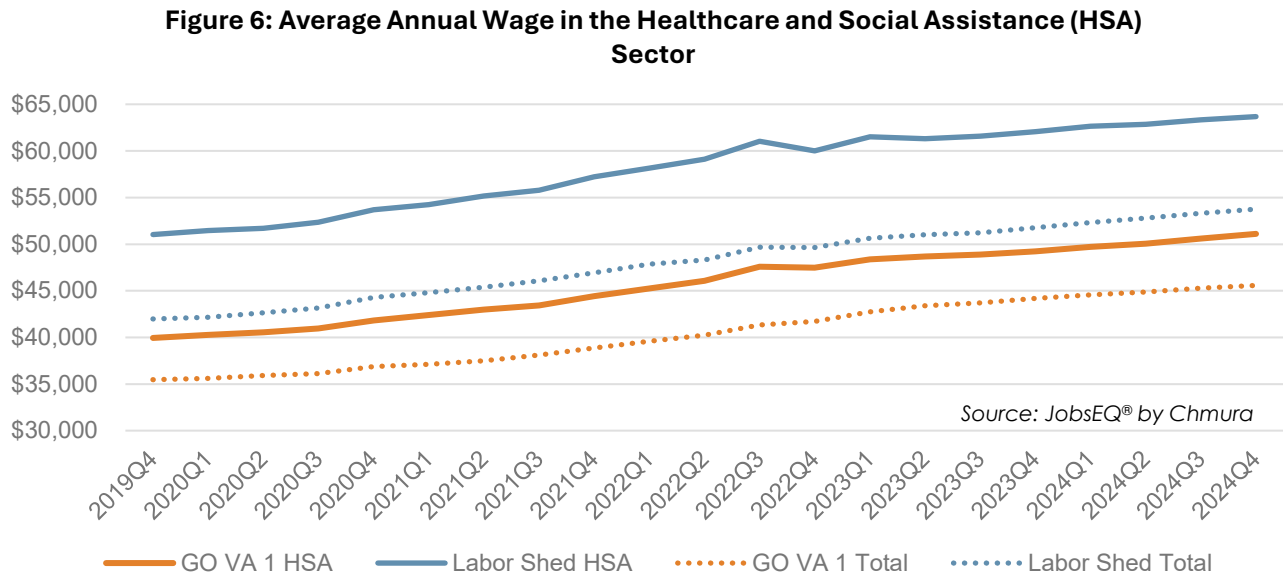
**Table2: Industry Snapshot, Healthcare and Social Assistance**

NAICS	Industries	GO VA 1				Labor Shed			
		Four Quarters Ending 2024Q4		Historical 5-yr.		Four Quarters Ending 2024Q4		Historical 5-yr.	
		Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Empl. Change	Annual %	Empl.	Avg. Annual Wages	Empl. Change	Annual %
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	822	\$56,100	226	6.60%	4,382	\$55,244	579	2.90%
6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners	1,179	\$47,371	217	4.20%	4,005	\$51,993	544	3.00%
6231	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	2,626	\$41,373	171	1.40%	7,890	\$44,771	-404	-1.00%
6242	Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services	146	\$34,864	105	29.10%	646	\$39,065	13	0.40%
6233	Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	685	\$33,299	34	1.00%	4,034	\$37,119	71	0.40%
6239	Other Residential Care Facilities	203	\$42,205	10	1.00%	500	\$40,891	-37	-1.40%
6244	Child Care Services	576	\$22,299	9	0.30%	2,743	\$25,332	-72	-0.50%
6212	Offices of Dentists	594	\$59,471	6	0.20%	3,235	\$67,441	23	0.10%
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	104	\$70,107	-12	-2.10%	1,216	\$59,643	333	6.60%
6223	Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals	18	\$56,341	-43	-21.50%	756	\$83,061	113	3.30%
6216	Home Health Care Services	1,200	\$39,861	-53	-0.90%	4,182	\$43,680	-395	-1.80%
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	3,241	\$55,599	-67	-0.40%	31,084	\$82,760	939	0.60%
6241	Individual and Family Services	3,791	\$34,537	-89	-0.50%	10,484	\$34,821	683	1.40%
6232	Residential Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Facilities	657	\$43,546	-103	-2.90%	1,803	\$43,648	-268	-2.70%
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	556	\$60,721	-103	-3.30%	1,818	\$55,010	-33	-0.40%
6211	Offices of Physicians	2,755	\$81,528	-128	-0.90%	14,944	\$95,558	863	1.20%
6222	Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals	560	\$69,105	-153	-4.70%	1,461	\$66,913	-66	-0.90%
6243	Vocational Rehabilitation Services	194	\$40,859	-162	-11.40%	1,038	\$44,394	-153	-2.70%
<b>62</b>	<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	<b>19,907</b>	<b>\$51,104</b>	<b>-135</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>96,221</b>	<b>\$63,681</b>	<b>2,731</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
	<b>Total - All Industries</b>	<b>134,607</b>	<b>\$45,575</b>	<b>-2,014</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>565,128</b>	<b>\$53,756</b>	<b>3,833</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

Source: JobsEQ® by Chmura

Industry Wages

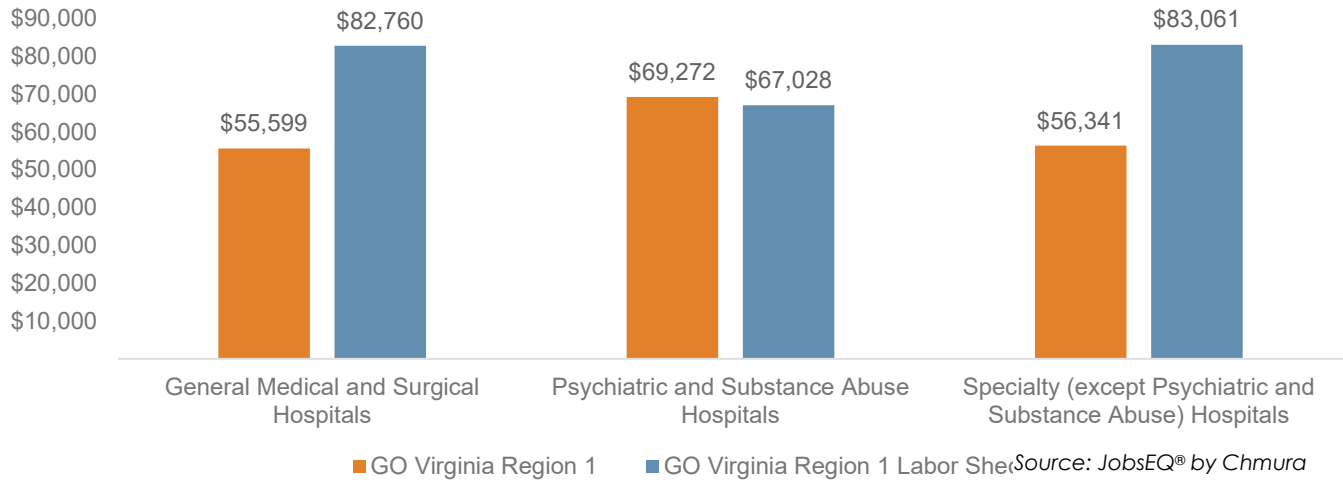
The healthcare and social assistance sector in the GO Virginia 1 region generally pays a higher wage than the average in the region. The sector paid a mean annual wage of \$51,104 in 2024Q4, over \$5,500 more than the GO Virginia 1 regional average. The GO Virginia 1 region, however, pays a lower average annual wage in the healthcare and social assistance sector than the average wage in its labor shed (\$53,756). The healthcare and social assistance sector in the labor shed pays an average annual wage of \$63,681, over \$12,500 more than the comparable average wage for the GO Virginia 1 region. With higher wages broadly in the labor shed, including much higher wages in the labor shed's healthcare sector, potential healthcare workers in the GO Virginia 1 region may be attracted away from the region to take advantage of the higher wages in the labor shed, despite the lower cost of living in the GO Virginia 1 region.



The disparity between wages for the healthcare and social assistance sector in the GO Virginia 1 region and the labor shed is most pronounced in the hospitals subsector. In the GO Virginia 1 region, this sector has an average annual wage of \$57,533, while the labor shed has an average annual wage of \$79,887, 39% higher than the GO Virginia 1 region. General medical and surgical hospitals pay an average annual wage of \$55,599 in the GO Virginia 1 region, but they pay an average annual wage of \$82,760 in the labor shed, a staggering 49% gap between the region to the labor shed. The average annual wage between the GO Virginia 1 region and the labor shed for specialty (except psychiatric and substance abuse) hospitals is only slightly lower at 47%, with the GO Virginia 1 region paying \$56,341 and the labor shed paying \$83,061. Psychiatric and substance abuse hospitals in the GO Virginia 1 region have a slightly higher average annual wage than the labor shed, paying \$69,105 and \$66,913, respectively.



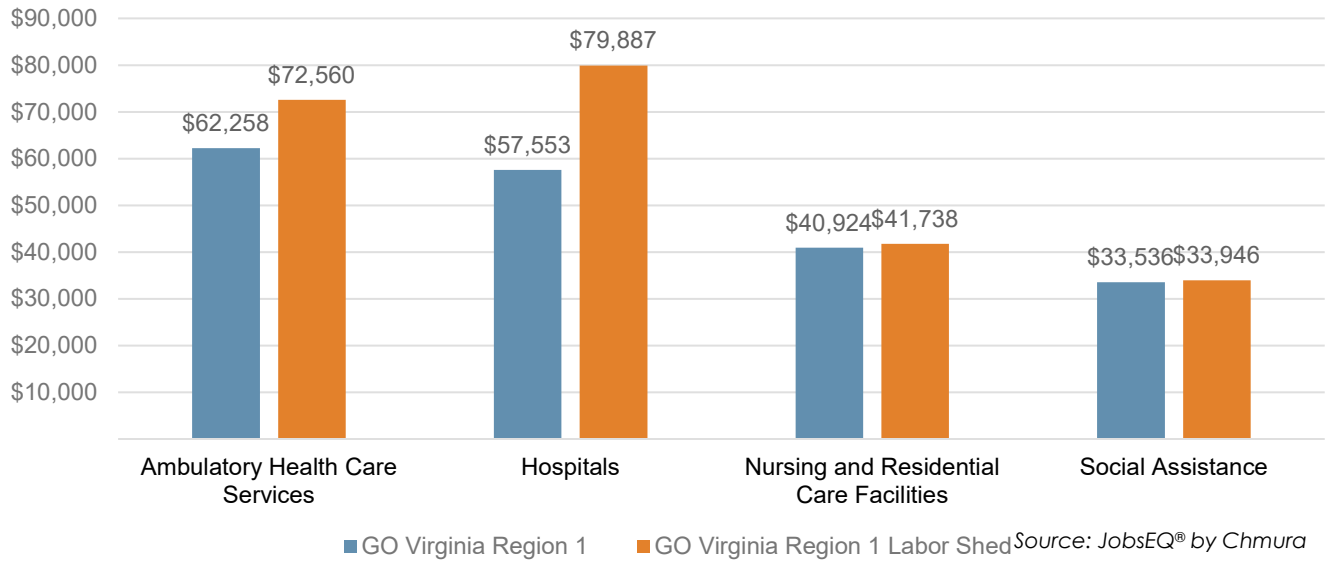
**Figure 7: Wages in the Hospitals Industry**



The ambulatory healthcare services subsector also pays a higher wage in the labor shed than in the GO Virginia 1 region. In the GO Virginia 1 region, this subsector has an average annual wage of \$62,258; the average annual wage is 17% higher in the labor shed at \$72,560. Within this subsector, offices of physicians have an average annual wage of \$81,528 in the GO Virginia 1 region compared to an average annual wage 17% higher in the labor shed at \$95,558. This is followed by offices of dentists with an average annual wage of \$59,471 in the GO Virginia 1 region and an average annual wage 13% higher in labor shed at \$67,441. Home health care services pay 10% more in the labor shed than in the GO Virginia 1 region. Offices of other health practitioners, medical and diagnostic laboratories, and other ambulatory healthcare services all pay more in the GO Virginia 1 region than in its labor shed, with average annual wages 2%, 15%, and 9% higher in GO Virginia 1, respectively; however, this is not enough to make up for the regional wage disparity in the other industries in this subsector.

The lower-paid nursing and residential care facilities and social assistance subsectors show a lower wage difference between the GO Virginia 1 region and the labor shed, with the average annual wage in these sectors 2% and 1% higher in the labor shed, respectively.

**Figure 8: Wages In Healthcare and Social Assistance Subsectors**



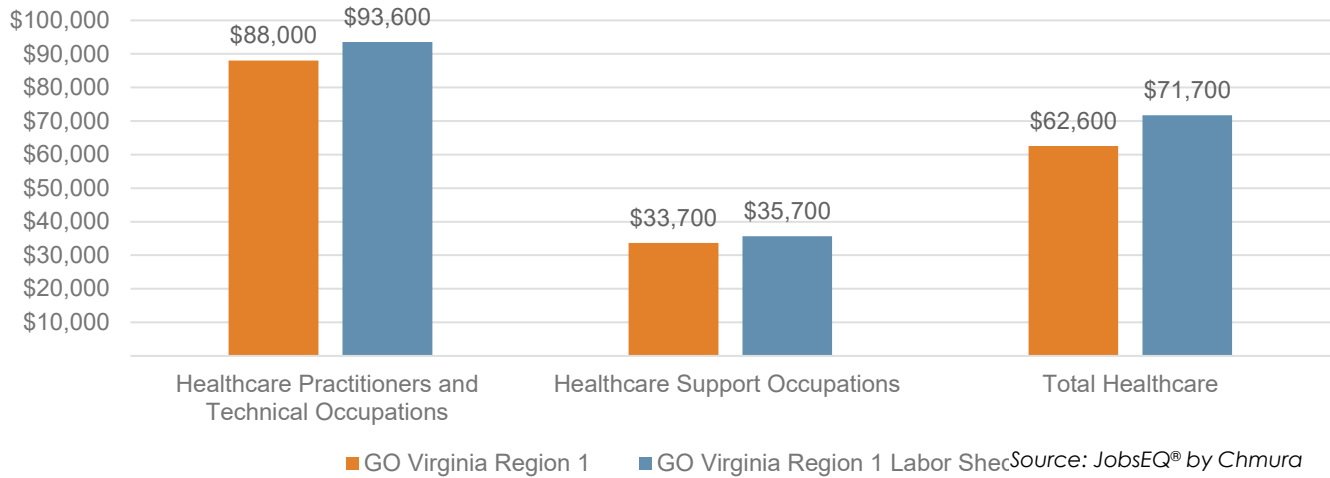
### Occupation Wages<sup>29</sup>

Healthcare occupations generally pay a higher wage in the labor shed than in the GO Virginia 1 region, albeit with a narrower difference than for the healthcare and social assistance industry. Average annual wages for healthcare occupations in the GO Virginia 1 region are \$62,600 compared to a 15% higher \$71,700 in the labor shed. Both groups that comprise healthcare occupations, i.e. healthcare practitioners and technical occupations and healthcare support occupations, pay an average annual wage 6% higher in the labor shed compared to the GO Virginia 1 region<sup>30</sup>. Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations generally have higher pay, with average annual wages in the GO Virginia 1 region and labor shed reaching \$88,000 and \$93,600, respectively. Healthcare support occupations are generally lower paid, with average annual wages in the GO Virginia 1 region and labor shed at \$33,700 and \$35,700, respectively.

<sup>29</sup> Occupation wages are based on OEWS wage data from the BLS which represents occupation wages within covered employment. OEWS wage data are collected via survey by the BLS and take into account local cost of living.

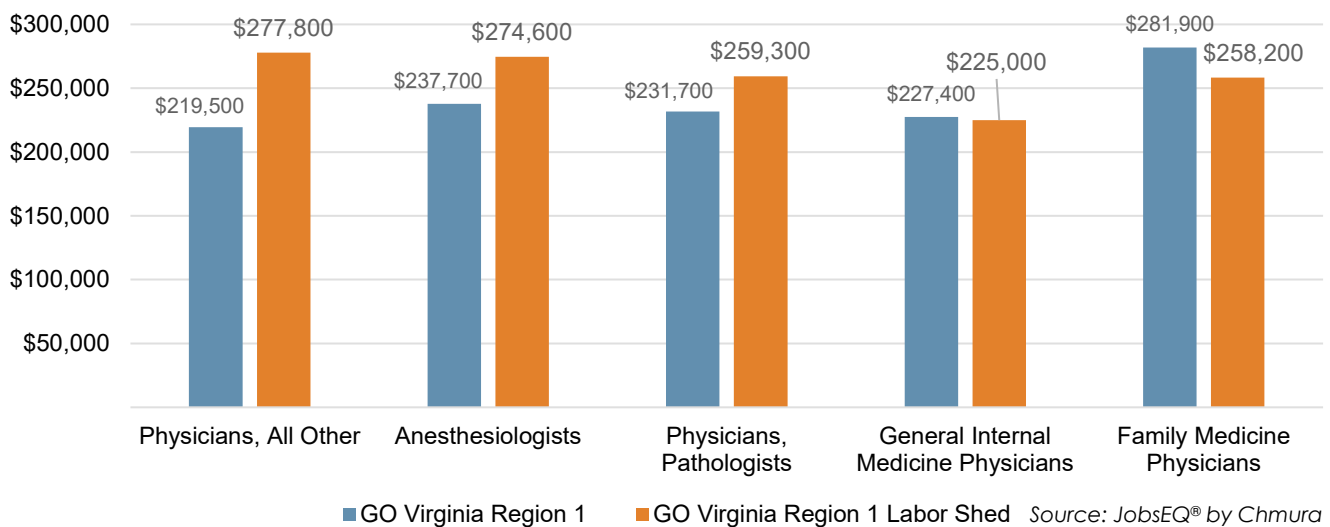
<sup>30</sup> The wage gap between GO Virginia Region 1 and the labor shed for the total healthcare occupation group is wider than the gaps for the healthcare occupation subgroups because of different occupation mixes in the regions, i.e., the labor shed has greater relative employment in the higher-paid healthcare practitioners and technical occupations subgroup than the GO Virginia 1 region.

**Figure 9: Wages in Healthcare Occupations**



Among healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, miscellaneous health technologists and technicians and physicians both have average annual wages 9% higher in the labor shed than in the GO Virginia 1 region. For physicians, there is a considerable amount of variability in the spread between the region and the labor shed. Physicians (all other), which include allergists, urologists, and sports medicine physicians, make an average annual wage of \$219,500 in the GO Virginia 1 region compared to \$277,800 (27% higher) in the labor shed. Anesthesiologists in the labor shed make 16% more at \$274,600 than those in the region (\$237,700). Pathologists make 12% more in the labor shed than in the region, at \$259,300 and \$231,700, respectively. Pediatricians, which are underrepresented in the GO Virginia 1 region, make 10% more in the labor shed than in the region. Generalized primary care occupations, family medicine physicians and general internal medicine physicians, make more in the GO Virginia 1 region than in the labor shed, with family medicine physicians in the region making 8% more than in the labor shed (\$281,900 and \$258,200, respectively). General internal medicine physicians make an average annual wage of \$227,400 in the region, 1% more than in the labor shed (\$225,000).

**Figure 10: Wages in Selected Physician Occupations**



Healthcare support occupations in the labor shed all made between 1% and 6% more than in the GO Virginia 1 region, with much lower variability. Massage therapists had the largest gap, with an average wage 6% higher in the labor shed, while occupational therapy assistants and aides had the smallest gap, at 1%.

## Occupation Demand and Gaps

The GO Virginia 1 Region is projected to need to hire 13,799 employees in healthcare occupations to meet demand over the next ten years, with healthcare practitioners and technical occupations requiring 4,257 new hires and healthcare support occupations requiring 9,542 new hires. The vast majority of demand over the next ten years, however, will be driven by separations, both exits (retirements) and transfers (changing career fields). Growth is only expected to account for 462 of the 13,799 new hires.

Nurse practitioners are the only occupation among healthcare occupations in which expected demand due to growth over the next ten years is higher than the expected demand due to exits and transfers. The GO Virginia 1 Region is expected to need to hire 198 nurse practitioners over the next ten years, with 52 due to exits, 60 due to transfers, and 86 due to growth. This follows an ongoing trend of nurse practitioners meeting demands in rural areas underserved by physicians.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast, growth will have a negative impact on the occupational demand for physicians in the GO Virginia 1 Region over the next ten years. The region is expected to need to hire 109 physicians to meet demand, with 101 from exits, 26 from transfers, and -18 from growth. A similar trend is seen for both registered nurses (1,019 total demand, 608 exits, 461 transfers, and -51 growth) and licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses (485 total demand, 260 exits, 267 transfers, and -42 growth).

**Table 3: Occupation Snapshot, Healthcare Occupations in the GO Virginia 1 Region**

SOC	Occupation	Four Quarters Ending 2024Q4		5-Year History		10-Year Forecast			
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,348	\$29,100	-136	-0.8%	5,088	2,420	2,223	445
31-1130	Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides	1,884	\$35,200	-12	-0.1%	2,461	1,071	1,484	-94
31-9090	Miscellaneous Healthcare Support Occupations	1,077	\$39,100	-21	-0.4%	1,553	520	988	45
29-1140	Registered Nurses	2,127	\$76,300	34	0.3%	1,019	608	461	-51
29-2050	Health Practitioner Support Technologists and Technicians	909	\$40,500	26	0.6%	841	328	503	10
29-2060	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	688	\$53,400	-52	-1.5%	485	260	267	-42
29-1120	Therapists	712	\$91,000	18	0.5%	386	174	164	48
29-2040	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	448	\$42,400	-52	-2.2%	280	98	189	-7
31-2020	Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides	160	\$57,300	-3	-0.4%	271	81	167	22
29-1170	Nurse Practitioners	225	\$117,400	38	3.7%	198	52	60	86
29-2030	Diagnostic Related Technologists and Technicians	264	\$69,700	-1	-0.1%	133	68	66	-2
29-1210	Physicians	539	\$247,500	1	0.0%	109	101	26	-18

<sup>31</sup> Kueakomoldej S, Turi E, McMenamin A, Xue Y, Poghosyan L. *Recruitment and retention of primary care nurse practitioners in underserved areas: A scoping review*. Nursing Outlook. May-Jun 2022.

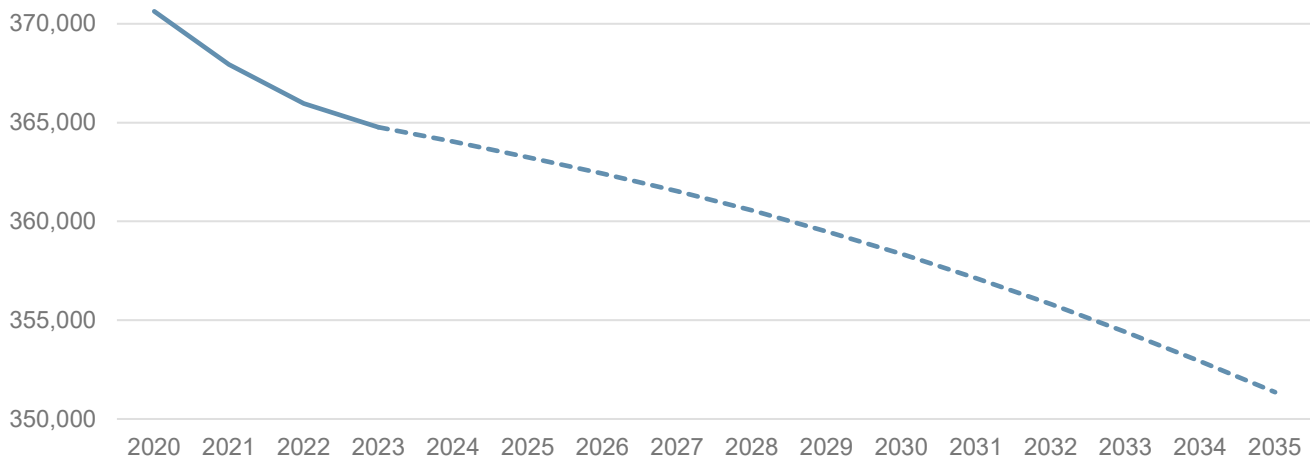
**Table 3: Occupation Snapshot, Healthcare Occupations in the GO Virginia 1 Region**

SOC	Occupation	Four Quarters Ending 2024Q4		5-Year History		10-Year Forecast			
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth
29-2010	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	172	\$60,100	-15	-1.7%	100	47	59	-6
31-9010	Massage Therapists	71	\$49,900	4	1.0%	98	42	50	6
29-1050	Pharmacists	301	\$135,000	-21	-1.3%	87	64	41	-18
29-2070	Medical Records Specialists	127	\$46,100	-4	-0.6%	85	44	41	0
29-1070	Physician Assistants	114	\$124,200	12	2.2%	84	24	37	23
29-1290	Miscellaneous Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	129	\$83,800	6	0.9%	81	51	29	1
29-2080	Opticians, Dispensing	93	\$46,900	15	3.5%	80	39	44	-3
29-2090	Miscellaneous Health Technologists and Technicians	113	\$48,300	11	2.2%	78	37	43	-1
31-2010	Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides	52	\$66,800	3	1.1%	72	21	43	8
29-9090	Miscellaneous Health Practitioners and Technical Workers	66	\$66,500	9	2.8%	41	21	20	1
29-1030	Dietitians and Nutritionists	52	\$69,800	4	1.4%	33	17	16	-1
29-1130	Veterinarians	72	\$110,200	3	1.0%	29	13	7	9
29-1040	Optometrists	65	\$132,600	16	6.1%	23	19	3	1
29-1020	Dentists	97	\$175,600	-2	-0.4%	22	19	5	-2
29-9020	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	26	\$62,300	2	2.0%	18	8	8	2
29-1010	Chiropractors	38	\$71,900	2	1.2%	16	12	3	1
29-1150	Nurse Anesthetists	35	\$208,300	2	1.3%	13	7	6	0
29-1240	Surgeons	42	\$307,900	-4	-1.8%	7	7	2	-1
29-1180	Audiologists	11	\$74,600	-1	-1.1%	6	4	2	1
29-1160	Nurse Midwives	5	\$110,500	0	0.7%	2	1	1	0
29-1080	Podiatrists	6	\$144,300	0	-0.6%	1	1	0	0
<b>Healthcare Total</b>		<b>14,067</b>	<b>\$62,600</b>	<b>-119</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>13,799</b>	<b>6,279</b>	<b>7,058</b>	<b>462</b>

Source: JobsEQ® by Chmura

The low or negative demand from growth for healthcare occupations in the GO Virginia Region 1 can be attributed in part to the declining projected population in the region. In 2023, the region had a population of 364,765. By 2035, it is expected to decline 4% to 351,356.

**Figure 11: Population in the GO Virginia 1 Region**



Source: JobsEQ® by Chmura

Healthcare occupations are also expected to have labor supply deficits in the GO Virginia 1 Region over the next ten years, with healthcare practitioners and technical occupations showing an annual supply deficit of 42, and healthcare support occupations showing an annual supply deficit of 9.

Registered nurses are expected to have the highest deficit, with an annual supply deficit of 9 over the next ten years, as the high exits and transfers make up for the lower demand from growth. Nurse practitioners, with positive demand from separations and growth, are expected to have an annual supply deficit of 7 over the next ten years, the same supply deficit as therapists. Overall, there are 18 healthcare occupations expected to have supply deficits and 15 expected to be in balance. No healthcare occupations in the GO Virginia 1 region are expected to have supply surpluses.

**Table 4: Occupation Gaps in the GO Virginia 1 Region**

SOC	Occupation	Annual Supply Gap
29-1140	Registered Nurses	(9)
29-1170	Nurse Practitioners	(7)
29-1120	Therapists	(7)
29-2050	Health Practitioner Support Technologists and Technicians	(5)
31-9090	Miscellaneous Healthcare Support Occupations	(4)
31-1130	Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides	(3)
29-2060	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	(2)
29-1070	Physician Assistants	(2)
29-2090	Miscellaneous Health Technologists and Technicians	(1)
29-1050	Pharmacists	(1)
31-9010	Massage Therapists	(1)
29-2070	Medical Records Specialists	(1)
29-1290	Miscellaneous Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	(1)
29-2010	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	(1)
29-1130	Veterinarians	(1)
31-2020	Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides	(1)

29-2030	Diagnostic Related Technologists and Technicians	(1)
29-2040	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	(1)
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	0
29-1080	Podiatrists	0
29-1160	Nurse Midwives	0
29-1240	Surgeons	0
29-1180	Audiologists	0
29-1020	Dentists	0
29-1010	Chiropractors	0
29-1150	Nurse Anesthetists	0
29-2080	Opticians, Dispensing	0
29-1030	Dietitians and Nutritionists	0
29-9020	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	0
29-1040	Optometrists	0
31-2010	Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides	0
29-1210	Physicians	0
29-9090	Miscellaneous Health Practitioners and Technical Workers	0

Source: JobsEQ® by Chmura



## Appendix 2: Southwest Virginia Healthcare Occupations in Virginia's 2024 High Demand Occupations List

Occupation (SOC Code and Occupation Description)	High Demand	Funding		STEM Occupations	Registered Apprenticeship
		FF	G3		
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	✓	✓	✓	STW	✓
29-1141 Registered Nurses	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
29-2061 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurs..	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-9092 Medical Assistants	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
11-9111 Medical and Health Services Managers	✓		✓	S&E Related	
31-9091 Dental Assistants	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	✓
31-9097 Phlebotomists	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
43-6013 Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	✓	✓	✓		
31-2021 Physical Therapist Assistants	✓	✓	✓	STW	
31-9096 Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Car..	✓	✓		S&E Related	
29-2053 Psychiatric Technicians	✓			S&E Related	
29-2018 Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
29-2034 Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-2011 Occupational Therapy Assistants	✓	✓	✓	STW	
29-2081 Opticians, Dispensing	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	✓
29-2072 Medical Records Specialists	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-9099 Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	✓	✓		S&E Related	
29-1292 Dental Hygienists	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
29-2056 Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-9094 Medical Transcriptionists	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
29-2099 Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
29-2057 Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	✓			S&E Related	
29-1126 Respiratory Therapists	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-1133 Psychiatric Aides	✓			STW	
29-1031 Dietitians and Nutritionists	✓		✓	S&E Related	
29-2032 Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-2022 Physical Therapist Aides	✓	✓	✓	STW	
29-2055 Surgical Technologists	✓	✓	✓	S&E Related	
31-9093 Medical Equipment Preparers	✓		✓	S&E Related	
31-1132 Orderlies	✓		✓		
51-9081 Dental Laboratory Technicians	✓		✓	STW	
29-2031 Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	✓	✓		S&E Related	

## Appendix 3: GO Virginia Regional Partners

In order to demonstrate the region's supply of partners, organizations, and correlating initiatives, a list is included in this section of efforts that are operating at a regional level. These efforts are categorized by focus of specific strategies or industry targets; however, many organizations are working on multiple strategies and across multiple industry sectors.

### Talent Development

- **Higher Education Institutions**

- **Four-year Colleges and/or Universities in the Labor Shed (\* denotes those located in Region One)**

- The University of Virginia's College at Wise \*
    - <https://www.uvawise.edu/>
    - Bluefield University \*
    - <https://www.bluefield.edu/>
    - Appalachian School of Law\*
    - <https://www.asl.edu/>
    - Appalachian College of Pharmacy\*
    - <https://www.acp.edu/>
    - Emory & Henry College\*
    - <https://www.ehc.edu/>
    - Lincoln Memorial University – College of Veterinary Medicine\*
    - <https://www.lmunet.edu/college-of-veterinary-medicine/>
    - King University
    - <https://www.king.edu/>
    - East Tennessee State University
    - <https://www.etsu.edu>
    - University of Pikeville
    - <https://www.upike.edu/>
    - Lincoln Memorial University
    - <https://www.lmunet.edu/>
    - Radford University
    - <https://www.radford.edu/>
    - Virginia Polytechnic Institute
    - <https://vt.edu/>
    - Concord University
    - <https://www.concord.edu/>
    - Alice Lloyd College
    - <https://www.alc.edu/>

- **Community Colleges in the Labor Shed (\* denotes those located in Region One)**

- Mountain Empire Community College \*
    - <https://www.mecc.edu/>
    - Southwest Virginia Community College \*
    - <https://sw.edu/>
    - Virginia Highlands Community College \*
    - <https://www.vhcc.edu/>

- Wytheville Community College\*
  - <https://www.wcc.vccs.edu/>
- Northeast State Technical Community College
  - <https://www.northeaststate.edu/>
- New River Community College
  - <https://www.nr.edu/>
- **Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center**
  - <https://www.swcenter.edu/>
- **Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board**
  - <https://vcwsouthwest.com/>
- **The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board**
  - <https://vcwnewrivermtrorgers.com/>
- **EO Companies**
  - <https://www.eoco.org/>

### Innovation & Scale Up Support

- **Opportunity SWVA**
  - <http://www.opportunityswva.org/>
- **People Incorporated**
  - <https://www.peopleinc.net/>
- **Small Business Development Centers**
  - Mountain Empire Community College SBDC
    - <https://www.mecc.edu/sbdc/>
  - Southwest Virginia Community College SBDC
    - <https://sw.edu/sbdc/>
  - Virginia Highlands Community College SBDC
    - <http://vhcc2.vhcc.edu/sbdc/>
  - Blueridge Crossroads SBDC
    - <https://brceda.org/>
- **Locus**
  - <https://locusimpact.org/>

## Sites & Infrastructure

- **Rural Industrial Facilities Authorities**
  - Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority
    - Counties of Dickenson, Lee, Scott, Wise, and the City of Norton
    - <http://www.lenowisco.org/lonesome-pine-rifa.html>
  - Cumberland Industrial Facilities Authority
    - Counties of Buchanan, Tazewell, Russell, and Dickenson
  - Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority
    - Counties of Carroll and Grayson, and the City of Galax
    - <https://brceda.org/>
  - Pathway Regional Industrial Facility Authority
    - Counties of Bland, Smyth, and Washington
  - Smyth-Washington Industrial Facilities Authority
    - Counties of Smyth and Washington County
- **Virginia Economic Development Partnership**
  - <https://www.vedp.org/region/southwest-virginia-e-region>

## Advanced Manufacturing

- **Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, Inc.**
  - <https://swvam.org/>
- **GENEDGE**
  - <https://genedge.org/>

## Agriculture

- **Appalachian Sustainable Development**
  - <https://www.asdevelop.org/>
- **Virginia Cooperative Extension**
  - <https://ext.vt.edu/>

## Information Technology

- **Appalachian Council for Innovation**
  - <https://inappalachia.com/appalachian-council-for-innovation/>

## Energy & Minerals

- **Southwest Virginia Energy Research & Development Authority**
  - [https://www.facebook.com/swvaenergy/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/swvaenergy/?ref=page_internal)
- **Energy DELTA Lab**
  - <https://www.energydeltalab.org/>
- **Virginia Department of Energy**
  - <https://dmme.virginia.gov/>
- **Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia**
  - <https://swvasolar.org/>

## Economic Development

- **Planning District Commissions**
  - Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission
    - <https://www.cppdc.org/>
  - LENOWISCO Planning District Commission
    - <http://www.lenowisco.org/>
  - Mount Rogers Planning District Commission
    - <https://www.mrpdc.org/>
- **Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority**
  - <https://www.vceda.us/>
- **Mount Rogers Regional Partnership**
  - <https://mountrogersregion.com/>

## Community Impact

- **Strong ACC**
  - <https://www.vceda.us/>
- **United Way of Southwest Virginia**
  - <https://www.unitedwayswva.org/>

## Creative Economy

- **Friends of Southwest Virginia**
  - <https://friendsofswva.org/>
- **Virginia Tourism Corporation**
  - <https://www.virginia.org/>

## Appendix 4: Region One Approved Projects

With the collaboration of partners, GO Virginia Region 1 has funded 47 regional projects, many of which are connected to previously mentioned efforts. Region 1 utilized the Economic Resilience and Recovery (ERR) funding to support a total of five regional projects and one Statewide Competitive project, in which Region 1 served as the lead. In addition, Region 1 awarded funding to one Talent Pathways Initiative project and one Helene Business Recovery Initiative project. These projects are included in the total number of awards for GO Virginia Region 1.

Region 1 also collaborated on multiple Statewide Competitive awards in which other regions served as the primary. Region 1 partnered on a Competitive ERR project with Region 7 as the lead in the Expansion of ICAP Mentor Network project. Region 1 has also participated in two Statewide Competitive projects with Region 3 for the GO-TEC Phase II and GO-TEC 2025 projects.

Summaries of the funded projects are included in this section. Full applications of each project and completed analysis/reports can be found on the GO Virginia Region One website at [www.goswva.org](http://www.goswva.org).

### Implementation (Per Capita) Projects

#### United Way of Southwest Virginia: Ignite Internships

United Way of Southwest Virginia (UWSWVA) expanded their Ignite Internships program throughout the region's high schools, working with schools and employers to collaboratively align school curriculums with employer needs. The two-year project includes a capacity-building platform that provides activities to encourage post-secondary education, streamlines work credentialing, provides work-based learning opportunities and matches new graduates with local employers through a web-based platform. At the close of contract, Ignite Internships created a total of 209 new internships, with 103 businesses participating.



UWSWVA was awarded \$250,000 in GO Virginia funding for salaries and contract services for software licensing. A total match of \$618,482 over two years is committed to the project by various sources, including a local match of \$50,000 from the Region VII School District Superintendents, which includes 17 school districts in Southwest Virginia.

UWSWVA was funded \$99,406 in GO Virginia Region Two funding to expand the program into Giles and Pulaski Counties and the City of Radford, which are also part of the Region VII school district.



## Mountain Empire Community College: Smart Farming at the Center for Workforce & Innovation of Appalachia



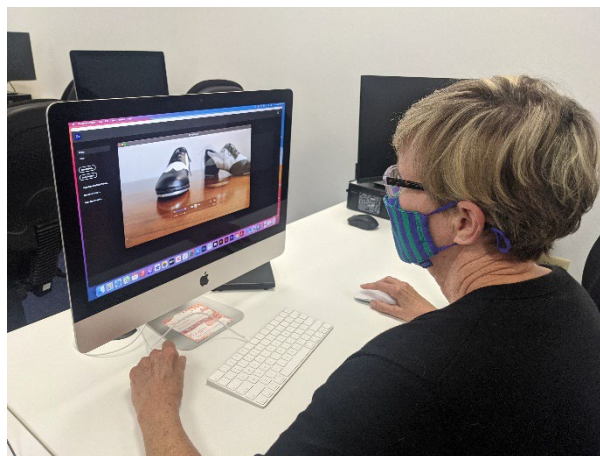
Located in the Town of Appalachia in the former Appalachia Elementary School, the Center for Workforce & Innovation of Appalachia will be a satellite training facility to enable Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) to expand many of its existing programs, as well as launch several new programs. GO Virginia funds will support MECC and its partners to establish the Smart Farming program, focused on using drone technology for agricultural purposes, which will allow the College to expand their Unmanned

Systems program. The concept of "Smart Farming" involves the use of technology to improve farming techniques, increase yields, and maximize profits. The program will involve a two-step process of data collection using drone technology and data analysis using the new Agricultural Science Laboratory. The addition of the Smart Farming courses will enable MECC to develop the first Unmanned Aerial Systems Associate Degree program in the Virginia Community College System and the only such program in Region One. As part of the Smart Farming program, the College will establish the first Agricultural Science Lab in the region to provide space and resources to analyze data collected by the UMS program. At close of the two-year contract, MECC had awarded 20 employable credentials to participating students.

MECC was awarded \$310,372 in GO Virginia funding for drone technology and Agricultural Science Lab equipment, renovations, and utilities. A total match of \$380,500 over two years is committed to the project, including a local match of \$62,500 provided by the Wise County Board of Supervisors.

## William King Museum of Art: Digital Workforce Development

William King Museum of Art will expand and diversify their educational programming to fill a regional gap and offer training and certification in Adobe Certified (ACA) with instruction in aerial videography at the newly established Digital Art Lab. The Digital Lab contains state-of-the-art design software and 3-D fabrication tools. Programming will target high school students and adult learners including regional entrepreneurs. GO Virginia will specifically support the implementation of the programming for ACA certification, which includes training components in aerial videography.



This project was awarded \$70,910 in GO Virginia funds, which will cover expenses for salary and fringe benefits for a Digital Lab Technician for year one, Adobe Suite software, Rhino 6 Software, drones for aerial videography, and supplies. The total project match is \$75,735 provided by various sources.

At the close of contract, 57 students had been trained in Adobe Bootcamp with 47 employees upskilled.

### **Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority: Project Intersection**

This project will develop and repurpose a former 188-acre mine site at the intersections of U.S. 23 and U.S. Alt 58 in Norton. Project Intersection will result in the development of a new regional industrial and technology site with four pad-ready sites with associated infrastructure, site-work, access roads, and amenities. The project is divided into three phases, of which GO Virginia will support Phase 3. This phase includes access to the pad ready sites and further development of Site#4 into pad ready status. At the close of contract, the 188-acre site had been advanced from a Tier II to Tier V.



The Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority was awarded \$485,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used for construction and administration expenses. The total project match is \$1,417,000 provided by Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Pilot Program.

### **Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority: Wildwood Natural Gas Extension**



This project will provide gas access to a Virginia “Certified” Tier 4 site adjacent to Exit 19 on Interstate 77 in Carroll County. This natural gas service will allow the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (BRCEDA) to competitively market the property for large scale advanced manufacturing projects. BRCEDA is partnering with Carroll and Grayson Counties, City of Galax, Mount Rogers Planning District

Commission, and the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC) to successfully complete the extension of the natural gas line.

BRCEDA was awarded \$527,600 in GO Virginia funds that will be used for contract services for Appalachian Natural Gas Distribution to design the natural gas line, obtain appropriate easements and/or permits, and construct the natural gas infrastructure. The project has a total match of \$320,684 provided by BRCEDA, TRRC, and Mount Rogers Planning District Commission.

At the close of contract, 19,591 feet of natural gas line extension was installed to Wildwood Commerce Park



## Appalachian Voices: Energy Storage & Electrification Manufacturing Jobs

The Energy Storage and Electrification Manufacturing Jobs project's goal is to create regional jobs in the energy storage and electrification manufacturing field and expand the local tax base by helping local manufacturers pivot their business while also working to attract an established national manufacturer to Region One. This implementation request is the result of Appalachian Voices' GO Virginia Region One enhanced capacity building effort, Solar Playbook. The project involves two interconnected tracks. Track 1 is focused on providing targeted resources to four local manufacturers interested in expanding or pivoting to the energy storage and electrification fields. Track 2, which will be supported exclusively by match and leveraged funds, will identify and attract an energy storage and electrification company to locate to Region One. At the close of contract, the project resulted in 44 jobs being retained, 43 jobs being created, and 6 businesses being served.



Appalachian Voices was awarded \$486,366 in GO Virginia funding for contract services for a targeted technical analysis, SWOT analysis, Voice of Industry engagement process, and targeted technical assistance from GENEDGE. Funds will also support salary and fringe for staff, contract services for a project manager, and administrative fees for indirect expenses. The project has a total match of \$245,000 provided by the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Ascent Virginia, and business cost share.

## The University of Virginia's College at Wise: SWVA Startup



SWVA Startup is a coordinated effort of UVA Wise and Opportunity SWVA that seeks to ignite the spirit of entrepreneurship in Southwest Virginia, establishing entrepreneurship as a key economic development strategy in the region. It is designed to inspire collective action, impact policy, foster regional networks, promote diversity, build on the region's remarkable assets and seek new investment. In doing so, the project will coordinate the region's efforts to increase the rate of regional entrepreneurship, leverage existing programs and resources, and identify and address economic gaps. The effort will result in the launch of an accelerator program, development and distribution of programming with targets underrepresented individuals and the strengthening of community development capacity in support of small business and entrepreneurs through regional leadership development efforts.

The project was awarded \$290,850 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used to hire a regional ecosystem builder, administrative assistant, travel, office rental, equipment, prototype development, and

administrative fees for indirect expenses. A total match of \$145,425 is committed from The University of Virginia's College at Wise from various match sources.

### **Appalachian Sustainable Development: Mobilizing the Supply Chain with Critical Infrastructure**

Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) will implement Phase 2 of a three-phased initiative focused on closing gaps in the local supply chain and expanding the capacity of agricultural small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. GO Virginia will support Phase 2, which involves acquiring infrastructure and equipment needed for institutional value-added production and packaging. ASD will launch infrastructure expansions for local producers developing new value-added products and packaging for the market or preserving their harvests. ASD is expecting to award 15 credentials within 2 years and maintain 10 farmers renting equipment annually. At the close of contract, the project exceeded projected metrics with a total of 171 credentials being awarded.



ASD was awarded \$212,200 GO Virginia funding to be used for salary, fringe, legal expenses and equipment. A total project match of \$106,624 is committed to the project through various sources, including a \$20,000 local match from Thompson Charitable Foundation.

### **Smyth County EDA: Pathway Park Infrastructure Improvements**

Smyth County Economic Development Authority (EDA) will advance the site readiness of Pathway Park and leverage the newly created Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (RIFA) in the region. Located south of US Route 11 in the Town of Chilhowie and adjacent to Interstate 81, Pathway Park is a Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Tier IV site. The project's goal is to implement infrastructure improvements to Pathway Park in order to spark interest in the property, increase competitiveness in the State and region, and be prepared for industry to locate in Smyth County. The project will also form a new RIFA initially including Smyth County and Bland County to facilitate this project and future ones. Smyth County EDA is expected to construct a water line and sanitary sewer extensions along with constructing an access road and a spec building. This project is expected to create 75 jobs within 2 years, with a total creation of 100 jobs in 5 years. At the close of the two-year contract, the project team successfully completed deliverables, having served 110 businesses and created 50 jobs.

Smyth County EDA was awarded \$600,000 in GO Virginia funding to be used for administrative costs and contract services to construct the water and sewer line extension and perform site work on the property. The total project match is \$300,000 provided by Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and the RIFA.

### **Carroll County Public Schools: GO TEC Region 1**

Carroll County Public Schools will pilot GO TEC career connection labs at Carroll County Middle School, Grayson County Middle School and one middle school at Wythe County Public Schools. These labs will develop a talent pipeline to support industry targets in Region 1. Students will be exposed to career

pathways in the target industries at the middle school level, expanding to dual enrollment through community college(s), moving to industry credentialing and then college/career training programs eventually leading to employment in the Region 1 industry targets. Upon completion of this project, 450 students are expected to be enrolled in GO TEC Career Connections Labs in Region 1, with 150 credentials awarded by 2025. At the close of contract, over 1,600 students had participated in high skills training through the GO TEC labs. IN addition, 2 new business partnerships were created, 3 new internships established, and 3 new course pathways were implemented.

Carroll County Public Schools was awarded \$308,924 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used for equipment for Grayson County and Wythe County Schools. The total project match is \$154,462 provided by both Grayson and Wythe County Schools.

### **United Way of SWVA: GO TEC Expansion**

Developed and led by the Institute of Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), GO TEC is a multi-year collaborative effort to scale career exposure programming and talent pathways. United Way of Southwest Virginia serves as the GO Virginia Region 1 GO TEC Coordinating entity through the GO TEC 2025 statewide Competitive GO Virginia grant.



The GO TEC Expansion project will provide the localities of Dickenson County, City of Bristol, City of Norton, Smyth County, Washington County, and Wythe County with six GO TEC career connection labs serving approximately 12,000 emerging workforce participants in GO Virginia Region 1 during the project period. This will continue the regional strategic approach to increase the available workforce through career exposure, career training, and job interest in the targeted growth sectors.

United Way of SWVA was awarded \$600,055 GO VA funds to be used for the purchase of equipment for labs in the participating school systems. The total project match is \$366,845 provided by the participating school systems.

### **Joint IDA of Wythe County: Progress Park Lot 10 Site Development**

The Joint IDA of Wythe County will utilize GO VA funding to support their site implementation project for Progress Park Lot 10 Site Development. The project aims to develop a 62-acre site in the Progress Park industrial area near Wytheville. Millions of dollars of investment have positioned the park for success and already over 1,200 people work for companies in the park daily. The development of Progress Park Lot 10 would provide a graded and sizeable site that could leverage significant existing investments in infrastructure (fiber, gas, water, wastewater, electricity), and provide a prospect with substantial acreage. A finished pad of 52-54 acres is expected to be constructed, which would accommodate facilities larger than 1 million square feet. The site development work for Lot 10 will elevate the property from a Tier 2 classification to a Tier 5 classification through the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP).

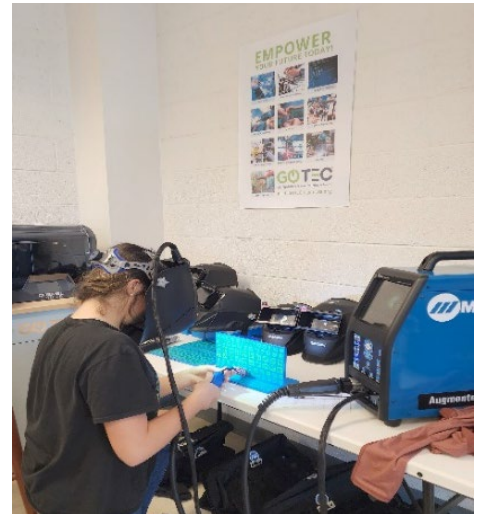


The Joint IDA of Wythe County was awarded \$425, 876 in GO VA funding to be used for construction fees associated with site development of Lot 10 as well as administrative costs related to supporting and administering grant activities. The total project match is \$213,000 sourced through local funds from Wythe County.

### **EO Companies: GO TEC Expansion 2**

EO Companies, formerly United Way of Southwest Virginia, is continuing to expand their Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers (GO TEC) initiatives throughout the region with the GO TEC Expansion 2. This project will provide the localities of Bland County, Smyth County, Tazewell County, Washington County and Wythe County with 5 classrooms serving approximately 12,000 emerging workforce participants in GO VA Region 1 over the next 3 years. This will continue the regional strategic approach to increase the available workforce through career exposure, career training, and job interest in the targeted growth sectors.

EO Companies was awarded \$491, 197 in GO VA funding, the majority of which will be used to purchase equipment for labs in the participating school systems. Other costs include salary, fringe, and administrative costs associated with managing the grant. The total project match is \$496,871.03 committed by the participating school divisions.



### **Virginia Highlands Community College: Electrical Technology Program Modernization Initiative**

Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) will modernize, enhance and expand its Electrical Technology Programming by purchasing updated industry-standard equipment, resulting in improved lab space utilization and course scheduling that would accommodate increased enrollment and credentials awarded, including Career Studies Certificates, Associates of Applied Science Degrees and OSHA-10 certification, as well as better prepare students for the workforce.

VHCC was awarded \$312,326 to purchase equipment and cover administration costs associated with managing the grant. The total project match is \$156,163 committed by the U.S. Department of Education, Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, and Smyth County.

### **Planning Projects (formerly Enhanced Capacity Building)**

#### **Southwest Virginia Technology Council: SWVA Hub Link**

The Southwest Virginia Technology Council (SWVTC) will complete initial work on the SWVA Hub Link platform, an online jobs platform and talent connection initiative, where job-seekers will be able to access job and training opportunities in the technology industry. Prior to the build-out of the platform, SWVTC will solicit input from regional stakeholders, including workforce training providers, community colleges, private industry partners, student and job-seekers, etc. in order to determine the most valuable features for the online platform. In addition, SWVTC will establish an inventory of existing training opportunities to be featured on the platform.

The SWVTC was awarded \$27,547.19 in GO Virginia funds for this enhanced capacity building project. GO Virginia funding will be used to hire a contractor to conduct the planning and stakeholder engagement work. A total match of \$27,637.20 is committed to the project.

### **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: Coal to Graphene Market Study**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) will conduct a market study, initial environmental impact analysis, and cost projections for the development of a graphene economy in Southwest Virginia. Virginia Tech's Institute of Critical Technology and Applied Science has developed a method of manufacturing graphene from coal at a significantly reduced cost from what is currently available. Virginia Tech will partner with EnviraCarbon on scaling up this production process for industrial applications, which align with several targeted clusters.

Virginia Tech was awarded \$25,000 in GO Virginia funds to be used to procure a consultant to complete the study. The project has a total match of \$25,000 in local funds provided by the Wise County Industrial Development Authority.

The study resulted in an [environmental impact analysis](#), a [business plan](#), and final report. These can all be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

### **LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Lonesome Pine RIFA Coordinator**

The LENOWISCO Planning District Commission, on behalf of the Lonesome Pine Rural Industrial Facilities Authority (LPRIFA), will establish a 24-month coordinator position to manage two federally funded projects of the LPRIFA; Project Intersection and Project Homestead. Consisting of the counties of Lee, Scott, Wise, Dickenson, and the City of Norton, the LPRIFA is a collaborative entity formed to provide a mechanism for the localities to cooperate on economic development projects to assist the region in overcoming geographic and financial barriers to economic growth. Overall, the proposed position will further the LPRIFA organizational structure and establish the self-sustainability of the LPRIFA by facilitating increased economic development opportunities, which will create more prospects for regional revenue sharing.

LENOWISCO was awarded \$50,000 in GO Virginia funding to support the position. The project has a total match of \$50,000, provided by LENOWISCO Planning District Commission and derived from local funds.

### **Appalachian Voices: The Solar Jobs, Manufacturing and Utility-Scale Investment Playbook for Far Southwest Virginia**

Appalachian Voices on behalf of the Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia, will develop The Solar Jobs, Manufacturing and Utility-Scale Investment Playbook for Far Southwest Virginia. Building on the Southwest Virginia SolSmart designation and 2017 Solar Roadmap for SWVA, the Playbook will be a highly actionable, data-based analysis that identifies specific pathways for large-scale solar-related investment and employment opportunities in Southwest Virginia. The Playbook will include a detailed market analysis and local asset-leveraging resources to attract and retain significant investments in the solar supply chain related to manufacturing and utility-scale solar developments. The market analysis will inform a workforce training and credential gap assessment, which will identify current and future credentialing needs, and how those needs may be addressed either through existing or new training and certification pathways.



Once released, the Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia will partner with localities and the solar industry to ensure implementation of the Playbook.

The project was awarded \$70,947 in GO Virginia funds, which will cover expenses associated with personnel and contract services. A total match of \$70,947 has been committed to the project by various sources.

The project resulted in a [target market analysis](#). This can also be found on the GO VA Region 1 website.

### **InvestSWVA: Project Oasis**

Project Oasis is a major initiative of InvestSWVA, a public-private partnership focused on driving economic sustainability in Region One around industry clusters. LENOWISCO Planning District Commission will work with InvestSWVA, Coalfield Strategies LLC, Virginia Department of Mines Minerals and Energy (DMME), and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to locate suitable sites within the region to attract data centers. This study will result in the development of tools that prioritize power and fiber network availability and the potential of mine pool water reclamation, a preliminary engineering feasibility and design, a market analysis, tenant research, and a concept design for possible data center sites.

This project was awarded \$50,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used for contract services related to site selection analysis, concept design, market analysis, and tenant research. A total match of \$50,000 is committed for the U.S. Department of Interior/U.S. Department of Energy.

This project resulted in a market analysis that can be found [here](#).

### **LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Project Energizer**

This project employs pumped storage hydro technology on a small, affordable scale and provides an opportunity for GO Virginia Region One to leverage its topography and be an innovator in renewable resources. The project seeks to answer two questions as it pertains to this small-scale, modular pumped storage hydropower technology that will lead to its potential application in Southwest Virginia. The first part is an identification of topographical attributes that are necessary to maximize the energy production of the technology and a review to determine locations in the region that can be used as a project site. Secondly, this project entails the testing of off-the-shelf components in this new pumped-storage application.

LENOWISCO was awarded \$50,000 in GO Virginia funding to procure contract services for location vetting, materials testing, analysis to be completed by Liberty University, and Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy hourly work to support location vetting. The project has a total match of \$50,000 in funds from Dominion Energy and the U.S. Department of Energy.

### **The University of Virginia's College at Wise/Opportunity SWVA: Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative (REI)**

Opportunity SWVA with UVA Wise will collaborate to develop the Launch SWVA Region One Strategy for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Investment. Opportunity SWVA is a coalition of 26 small business support and community development organizations, which is optimal for coordinating the region's

entrepreneurial ecosystem. This Innovation and Investment plan will build upon the TEconomy report and develop an action plan to implement recommendations for Region One.

The project was awarded \$80,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will be utilized for consultant services and coordination of meetings. The total project match was \$40,000 provided through the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF).

#### **Virginia Tech Virginia Cooperative Extension: SWVA Agricultural Opportunities Project Manager**

This project will establish a regional project manager position focused on providing additional capacity to advance agribusiness opportunities in Region One. Partnering with Dickenson County, Grayson County, regional extension agents, education institutions, and other partners, the position will implement the recently completed Southwest Virginia Agricultural Action Plan, advance the core strategies in that plan and other related plans and specifically support work that grows the beef cattle, small grain, and craft beverage industries, among others.

Virginia Cooperative Extension was awarded \$100,000 in GO Virginia funding to support salary and benefits for the project manager over the two-year period. The project has a total match of \$100,000, provided by Dickenson County, Grayson County, and additional funding sources.

#### **United Way of Southwest Virginia: Ignite Tech Talent Phase 1 Discovery**

With the ultimate goal to increase the number of graduates from high school, community college, and college ready to work in Information Technology (IT) jobs in Southwest Virginia, the Ignite Tech Talent initiative will develop and launch an ecosystem of IT talent through a foundational funnel model. GO Virginia will fund the first phase, which will be a one-year discovery phase that includes assessing capacity of schools to create pathways to careers, as well as student interest in IT careers. It will also baseline current employer activities and demand for specific skills, certifications and degrees for entry-level positions. After Phase I validation, Phase II implementation will develop IT internships for youth, community college students, and college students. It will also include necessary equipment needed to support IT curricula, resources for outreach, and professional development.

This project was awarded \$251,960 in GO Virginia funds, which will cover expenses for personnel, contract services, software for students and employers, administration, and programming for educational institutions. The total project match was \$251,961 provided through various sources.

#### **Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority: Project Fuse**

Project Fuse will develop a playbook for local economic developers to promote telework employment strategies in the Lonesome Pine RIFA territory, which includes Dickenson County, Lee County, City of Norton, Scott County, and Wise County. The Lonesome Pine RIFA will procure a consultant with economic development expertise and business relationships to develop an actional playbook that will provide strategic direction to economic developers as they assist current and prospective businesses explore teleworking as a way to maintain or grow their operations.

Lonesome Pine RIFA was awarded \$70,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used for contract services to procure a consultant and administrative fees for indirect expenses. The project has a total match of \$35,000 provided by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

The full report can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

### **InvestSWVA: Project Thoroughbred**

This is a regional agriculture growth strategy that builds on the area's rich history of growing small grains by capturing new value for Southwest Virginia's farmers through serving Virginia's growing craft beverage industry. This project relies on significant partnerships between multiple parties to bring a \$2.5 million fully operational grain terminal to the area. The terminal will be the only facility of its kind for a 300-mile radius and will allow farmers to take advantage of better-margin specialty grains. In order to prepare for the opening of the terminal in the fall of 2022, InvestSWVA is seeking funding to build upstream farmer capacity by demonstrating the opportunity, executing variety trials to find the right crop mixes, and developing a land bank to help next generation farmers that will be attending Mountain Empire Community College's grain management program succeed.



InvestSWVA was awarded \$100,000 in GO Virginia funds that will be used for contract services for grain demonstration, variety trials, and land bank development, as well as supplies, rent/lease, and legal expenses. The project has a total match of \$100,000 provided by the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy.

### **Emory and Henry College: GROW(TH) The Business & Agriculture in SWVA**

Emory and Henry College explore a partnership with Appalachian Sustainable Development, Southwest Virginia Cultural Center & Marketplace, Project Glade, and the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator to dedicate a space on campus to become an Innovation Hub for Agricultural Initiatives and support on-going ag-related entrepreneurship education. This project specifically requests funding to support a feasibility study to examine the possibilities through this partnership for enhancing profitability of the region's agricultural industry along existing value chains, be they in growing, distribution, manufacturing, or retail.

This project was awarded \$52,950 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used for contract services to procure a consultant to develop the feasibility study, hosting a conference, and a host website for sharing the study findings. The total project match was \$26,500 provided by Emory & Henry College.

A summary brochure and final report from this project can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

### **LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Project Innovation**

A project of the Southwest Virginia Energy Research & Development Authority, Project Innovation will commence the development of the Southwest Virginia Energy Park. The project entails two main planning activities to include location vetting for park activities and designing of Park governance for a startup and sustainability plan. This work will set the stage for the region to develop and implement the Park, attracting investment and new industries to the region.

This project was awarded \$100,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used to procure an administration team to determine the Park's governance model, assist with designing the Park, and develop a plan for a startup and long-term sustainability. The total project match was \$150,000 provided by the Economic Development Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

### **InvestSWVA: Project Veer**

Project Veer will engage wind energy industry experts to perform a market analysis for Region One's manufacturers to participate in the onshore and offshore wind supply chain. The project will address both onshore and offshore wind supply chain needs, but will place a priority on the offshore wind industry. Given the pipeline of offshore wind projects spurring along the east coast, there is an opportunity for local companies to enter this market and for the region to create workforce to support the industry. This market analysis will serve as an economic development roadmap to assist the region in understanding the supply chain for renewable energy, where the gaps are, and how to close those gaps.

InvestSWVA was awarded \$49,750 in GO Virginia funds to contract with Xodus Group to complete the offshore and onshore wind analysis for Southwest Virginia's manufacturer's and will provide outreach stakeholder engagement facilitation. A total match of \$24,975 has been committed by Coalfield Strategies and Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission.

The final report from the project can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

### **Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Make it Here!**

The Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Make it Here! Initiative will provide staffing and resources to begin retaining and attracting talent within the region. The project will focus on the expansion of education and training opportunities that lead directly to occupations in two primary target industries of manufacturing and healthcare. This project will help launch the new Talent Solutions Program to help address stress on labor supply/talent which is causing severe impacts on the regional economy.

Funding from each investor will be used to cover staffing and operational costs associated with the implementation. These staff positions will be primarily focused on executing the activities developed to build, retain, and attract talent into healthcare and manufacturing. The organization will accomplish this by providing staff to engage every high school within partner localities to connect healthcare/manufacturing employers with CTE programs, student internship programs, drive participation with United Way and others, and other workforce resources. This will be coupled with a tailored and exciting marketing campaign to engage k-12, upcoming college graduates, and other target populations to peak interest in career and training opportunities in the Mount Rogers Region.

The Mount Rogers Regional Partnership was awarded \$90,000 in GO Virginia funding which will help cover the salary of the Talent Solution Coordinator over a two-year period. Total match funding of \$45,000 will be used to cover management and administration costs, specifically for the coordination of the healthcare talent piece.

The final report from this project can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

### **Virginia College Fund: Gupton Initiative**

The Gupton Initiative will launch and demonstrate the sustainability of a career pathways partnership with VCU's College of Engineering to create a pipeline of internship opportunities for students of the Virginia College Fund member institutions in the advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing cluster in central Virginia, and to further validate the potential for employment in advanced manufacturing sectors across the Commonwealth, most specifically in the rural regions represented by the VCF member institutions. The specific outcome of the project is a roadmap for ensuring that a first cohort of students from VCF member institutions enrolls in the VCU Medicines for All Institute in the fall of 2022.

Region 3 is the lead region for the project, which was awarded \$100,000. Region 1 will contribute \$10,000 in Per Capita funds to support the project. GO Virginia funds will be used for a market feasibility study, travel, outreach, and administrative fees. A total match of \$49,000, including \$9,000 from Virginia Commonwealth University, will be used to help fund salaries for the project.

### **LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Small Modular Reactors (SMR) Feasibility**

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) have capital investments from developers with projected long-term life cycles of 40+ years. SMRs are new, cutting-edge licensed technologies that are small nuclear power plants of up to 300 megawatts; they generate electricity 24/7 and are reliable zero carbon generators. Identifying potential SMR host locations is technical and complex related to the requirements of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and can be transformation for the Southwest Virginia region.

LENOWISCO Planning District Commission will submit a Request for Quote (RFQ) for a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to determine the feasibility of developing multiple SMR sites within the Lonesome Pine Region Industrial Facilities Authorities' (LPRIFA) geography. This footprint includes the Counties of Dickenson, Lee, Scott, Wise, and the City of Norton. The study will explore existing SMR reliant infrastructure and additional infrastructure that will be needed to support such sites. The study will also reveal the direct and indirect regional economic impacts of SMRs, along with local revenue estimates.

LENOWISCO Planning District Commission was awarded \$100,000 in GO Virginia funding as well as a total of \$50,000 funding match from Virginia Energy to support the development of a prospective site identification study regarding the siting and development of multiple Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) within the coal communities of Southwest Virginia.

The final study from the project can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

## LENOWISCO Planning District Commission: Small Modular Reactors (SMR) Supply Chain Analysis

LENOWISCO Planning District Commission is continuing their efforts within SMRs. This project aligns with a U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) technical assistance grant request. It aligns for the purpose of selecting an SMR industry cluster subject matter expert to prepare a Regional SMR Manufacturing Supply Chain Report. The report will assist in identifying and preparing for retooling existing businesses and recruiting new business with manufacturing jobs to support the SMR Manufacturing Supply Chain in the LENOWISCO PDC's geographic footprint, and to include Dickenson County, VA. SMRs and their supply chain processes provide a unique ability for communities in far Southwest Virginia to position themselves as leader in the next wave of energy generation.

LENOWISCO Planning District Commission was awarded \$50,000 GO Virginia funding to be used towards the issuance of RFP to select a SME and the scope of work, including a final deliverable in the form of a report referencing sufficient data, assumptions, and conclusions to be of practical use for most all southwest Virginia interested in hosting SMR manufacturers. A total match of \$25,000 is committed from U.S EDA to support the project.

## Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Virtual Reality for Training and Career Exploration

This project is a planning process to conduct a needs assessment, complete a feasibility study, and provide an action plan for implementation of Virtual Reality curriculum in high school career and technical education programs. The project will identify if virtual reality is a valid response to increasing talent pipeline development, closing workforce gaps, and potentially filling a gap in the GO TEC program. If the planning process validates the need to utilize virtual reality systems in a high school curriculum, the final piece of the planning process plan will be the development of an action plan. The action plan for implementation will include funding opportunities, partners, curriculum, and tools.

Mount Rogers Regional Partnership was awarded \$50,000 GO Virginia funding to be used toward contracting with a consulting firm to conduct a feasibility study to determine need and ensure partnership and use of VR systems for talent recruitment. A total match of \$25,000 is committed from Wellspring Foundation of SWVA to support the project.

The finals products from the project can be found on the [GO Virginia Region 1 website](#).

## Appalachian Sustainable Development: Agricultural Campus Site Development Plan



Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) will utilize GO VA funding to conduct extensive planning and preparation before breaking ground on the site for their anticipated agricultural campus that will help serve stakeholders in multiple locations through Region 1. The campus will serve numerous functions such as creating a secondary food hub, processing infrastructure for value-added product development, creating a business development hub, offering training and entrepreneurial support for new producers and providing production and demonstration sites for innovative production



practices and crops. The campus will also aim to provide workforce development sites for trainees to learn through paid on-the-job training, short term rental properties to generate revenue to cover some operating costs while also providing training opportunities for agritourism and providing solar and water reclamation implementations and demonstrations for small business owners.

Appalachian Sustainable Development was awarded \$25,000 in GO VA funds to facilitate the planning process. Funds will specifically cover fees for required contract services and the consulting and development fees for required reports and studies. A total match of \$25,000 is committed to support the project.

### **Mount Rogers Regional Partnership: Site Selection, Identification and Evaluation**

Mount Rogers Regional Partnership (MRRP) plans to conduct a detailed study of prospective sites within the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, and Wythe and the city of Galax to aid in planning for continued economic growth throughout the region. The project is expected to deliver detailed reports on each of the top 10 candidate sites detailing acreage, site

location attributes, transportation access, topography, known presence or awareness of any environmental issues, utility available, rail access, on-site easements or other utility conflicts, zoning/land use of subject property and adjacent properties, build out potential, and potential development costs to include maps and figures as necessary.

Mount Rogers Regional Partnership was awarded \$100,000 in GO VA funds to cover consulting costs for the site study as well as a portion of an online data source tool that MRRP will have access to for 3 years after the close of the project. A total match of \$50,000 is committed to support the project and will be used to fund contract services.

### **Wise County, VA: WiseLink Coalfield Transformation Project**

Wise County, VA plans to conduct a transmission study to address and solve transmission challenges throughout the Region. This project is part of a larger effort that may leverage millions of dollars in U.S. Department of Energy funding to improve infrastructure in Southwest Virginia.

Wise County, VA was awarded \$99,481.70 in GO VA funds that will be used to hire a consultant to assist in the transmission plan strategy development. A total match of \$55,639 is committed to support the project.

### **BRCEDA: Wildwood Park Site 1 Due Diligence & Design Services**

Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (BRCEDA) plans to complete due diligence and design services for Wildwood Commerce Park Site 1. The efforts associated with this planning project will enable Site 1 at Wildwood Commerce Park to be elevated from a Tier 2 to a Tier 4 through the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP). The required studies and reports will be completed for both Tier 3 and Tier 4 designation so that future funding can be sought out for Site 1 for grading and construction.

BRCEDA was awarded \$100,000 in GO VA funding to cover architectural and engineering fees associated with the studies and reports required to elevate Site 1 to a Tier 4. A small percentage is also budgeted to support administrative costs. A total match of \$50,000 is committed to support the project.

### **SWVA Higher Education Center Foundation: Middle School Energy Education Academy Pilot Study**

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation will pilot a Middle School Energy Education Academy. This planning effort will research the need, explore career pathways, identify benchmark data, determine best practices from neighboring programs, and develop curriculum for a Southwest Virginia Energy Education Academy focused on students of the middle school age. The effort will also create a pilot academy stationed at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education center to learn more about students' and parents' needs for career exploration as well as prepare students for the current and future workforce in the energy field.



The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation was awarded \$52,500 in GO VA funds that will cover costs of supplies, a part-time coordinator, and administrative expenses associated with the project. A total match of \$26,250 is committed to support the project.

### **Wise County, VA: Microreactor Feasibility Study**

Wise County, VA, along with the assistance of LENOWISCO Planning District Commission will utilize RFQ's to procure a Subject Matter Expert to conduct a feasibility study. The study will include the identification of potential microreactor sites, providing site requirements and infrastructure capabilities, which will provide insight into future growth opportunities for the Region, including those of renewable energy.

Wise County, VA was awarded \$97,500 in GO VA funds to cover expenses to support the development of the feasibility study. A total match of \$50,000 is committed to support the project.

## **Talent Pathways Initiative**

### **Appalachian Council for Innovation (ACI) Talent Pathways Initiative**

ACI, along with GENEDGE as lead partner, will conduct a situational analysis and develop a regional talent pathway strategy to support the workforce needs of Advanced Manufacturing throughout Region 1 localities. The TPI planning effort will be done in two larger phases; Phase 1 is data collection and situational analysis with Phase 2 producing specific strategies and high impact pathway projects. The scope of work for this initiative includes formation of industry coalitions to guide and advise on development of a quantitative and qualitative situational analysis, gap analysis, identification of skills and training needs to fill jobs, and an asset map evaluation the region's capacity to support the identified workforce needs. Based on the analyses, the project team will identify strategies and talent pathways projects for future implementation that support development in Advanced Manufacturing.



Appalachian Council for Innovation was awarded \$250,000 GO Virginia Funding to be used toward administration fees and salaries, as well as contract services, outreach, needs assessment, studies, and travel. A total match funding of \$125,000 is committed to the project.

The final TPI report can be found on the [GO VA Region 1 website](#).

## Statewide Competitive Projects

### Regions 1 & 3: GO-TEC Phase II *(Region 3 Primary)*

Region 1 collaborated with Region 3 on the Great Opportunities in Technology and Engineering Careers (GO-TEC) Phase II project that includes participation from Wytheville Community College (WCC) and the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe and Smyth as well as the city of Galax. Led by Danville Community College, GO-TEC Phase II is designed to increase capacity for training high demand, high income workers and to increase the pipeline of students entering five regional training areas of need: precision machining, welding, IT/cybersecurity, robotics/mechatronics, and advanced materials. The project includes a “hub and spoke” model, which has students from “spoke” institutions coming to a “hub” for specialized training. In WCC's case, once completing WCC's machining program, students would complete a year of advanced training in machining in Danville.

The GO-TEC Phase II project was awarded full funding with a contingency that a scaled approach be initially funded at \$1.3 million and validated after a year prior to receiving the full \$4.8 million. The award includes \$65,536 in funding for WCC to strengthen its precision machining program and begin exploration of and support for Career Connection labs in Region One's middle schools. WCC has committed a total match of \$65,536 in local funds to the project.

### Institute of Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) - GO TEC Virginia 2025: Regions 1, 3, 4, and 5 *(Region 3 Primary)*



GO TEC Virginia is a partnership between IALR, GO Virginia Regions 1, 3, 4, and 5, three In-Region Coordinating Entities (IRCE), employers, economic developers, K12 Divisions, and higher education institutions. GO TEC Virginia will be executed by IALR and the three IRCEs, with efforts informed and endorsed by a 16-member multi-region Board of Directors. Through the IRCEs, each region will establish a GO TEC Advisory Board composed of 12 members. GO TEC Virginia 2025 includes the development of three GO TEC Expansion Labs - one each in Region 1, Region 4, and Region 5 - to serve as a focal point for regional economic developers,

working with existing and prospective businesses, to showcase the GO TEC talent pathways and hands-on technology integration that create a pipeline of skilled workers.

The GO TEC Virginia 2025 project was awarded a total of \$3,474,821 GO VA funds to complete the project, with a committed match of \$2,426,079.

## **Economic Resilience & Recovery (ERR) Projects**

### **Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance: Perseverance**

Perseverance is an effort to assist manufacturing companies with reopening and continuing operations in a safe and efficient manner, while reducing the spread of COVID-19. Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance is proposing to assist small to midsize regional manufacturers by coordinating evaluation and diagnostic services to identify issues within their operations and recommend how to respond to new health and safety standards. The Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC) will provide expertise to conduct evaluations utilizing their E3 evaluation with the addition of a COVID-19 matrix. The project will complete 20 evaluations and reports with recommended solutions for the manufacturing companies.

The project was awarded \$100,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will cover expenses associated with utilizing MTC consultants to provide evaluation and diagnostic services to manufacturing employers. A total match of \$52,500 has been committed to support the project.

### **Appalachian Sustainable Development: Farmer Pipeline: Maintaining the Supply Chain by Growing Farmers**

In order to offset disruptions with market access, distribution, and the food supply chain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) is proposing to assist regional farmers by offering digital tools that may open up new market opportunities, increase product visibility, and enable the coordination of distribution and logistics. ASD will implement various agriculture online platforms to include a core platform to facilitate whole sale logistics at the Appalachian Harvest Food Hub, a training platform to provide education content to farmers, farmer efficiency technology to streamline productions processes and online marketplace to serve institutional buyers and direct-to-consumer sales, and project management software for metrics tracking, data collection, and accurate reporting. ASD will also conduct needs assessments to identify and connect critical suppliers of goods and services to reduce service and production disruptions. At the end of the contract period, ASD had surpassed target metrics, including upskilling at total of 152 farmers and job seekers in digital tools.

ASD was awarded \$99,996 in GO Virginia funds, which will cover the digital training platforms, equipment, and project management. The project has a total match of \$51,076 provided by Appalachian Regional Commission.

### **Appalachian Council for Innovation: COVID-19 Business Continuity & Resiliency**

The Appalachian Council for Innovation (ACI) will partner with a number of regional partners to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19 and future disasters by assisting regional businesses with prevention consulting on-site, consistent public messaging, education, development of best practices, and continuity/resilience assessment and gap analysis. The effort has the potential to decrease the financial burden on businesses, maintain and improve community health, and provide the business community with the tools necessary to respond to and recover from future events.

The project was awarded \$68,500 in GO Virginia funds, which will be used for salaries, travel, training, administration, program promotion, and contract services for the development of a COVID-19 Business Support Resources portal on the IN Appalachian web platform. The total match of \$34,500 is provided by ACI, GENEDGE, and the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission.

### **Mountain Empire Community College Foundation – Project WELD**



Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) will implement Project Workforce Education and Life Development (WELD). As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and changing workforce dynamics, the ability to fill open positions, particularly in high-demand, highly skilled occupations, has proven difficult for regional manufacturers. Project WELD's solution is to tap into an underutilized labor force, those individuals with a history of incarceration. This project will train those individuals while incarcerated and link them to employment opportunities upon release. The project aims to see 65 students receive training by April 2024, with 52 of those students successfully completing the WELD program and an anticipated 35 program completers achieving gainful employment upon release.

The project was awarded \$101,025 in GO Virginia funds that will be used for equipment, supplies, utilities, and administration to support the program. A total match of \$50,730 was committed to the project.

### **United Way of Southwest Virginia – Employer Sponsored Childcare Benefit**

United Way of Southwest Virginia (UWSWVA) will develop the Employer Sponsored Childcare Benefit program focused on the advanced manufacturing industry. The project will allow employees who left the workforce due to the pandemic to be able to return to or join the workforce. The proposed program involves a public-private partnership to assist advanced manufacturers fill open positions and retain workers in current positions by offering employees a competitive childcare fringe benefit, which will also help meet a major barrier to employment for parents.

The project was awarded \$269,406 in GO Virginia funds to be used for salaries, outreach, and administration to support the project. A total match of \$400,000 was committed to support the project.

## **Helene Business Recovery Initiative (HBRI) Projects**

### **PBS Appalachia: VA Small Business Disaster Response Web Portal**



In response to Tropical Storm Helene that crossed through Southwest Virginia in September 2024, PBS Appalachia will work to develop resources for a web based portal to help businesses and citizens affected by the disaster access the help they need to rebuild and reactivate the economy in Southwest Virginia. The web portal will act as a one-stop-shop for businesses and citizens in Southwest Virginia to easily navigate and access resources needed to help rebuild the region,

whether those resources be federal, state or community-based.

PBS Appalachia was awarded \$97,500 in GO VA funds, which will be used to cover cost of salaries, contract services, and administrative fees associated with implementing the web portal. A total match of \$48,750 was committed to support the project.

## **Statewide Economic Resilience & Recovery (ERR) Projects**

### **GENEDGE: Retooling Virginia's Manufacturers for Strategic Industries (Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9)** *(Region 1 Primary)*

GENEDGE will partner with the nine GO Virginia Regions and companies across the state to expand the capabilities of existing Virginia suppliers to develop sustainable revenues by providing strategically important products. GENEDGE is looking at a near term and mid-to-long term approach to address current critical shortages, placing emphasis on speed to supply. As part of this grant, GENEDGE will also implement mid-to-long-term approach that will emphasize building sustainability and resilience into the supply chain. The strategy is to develop a Virginia-based supply network that can provide sustainable impact and to build a planned capacity and response to be prepared to handle impacts of future recurrences.

GENEDGE was awarded \$2,950,000 in GO Virginia funds, which will cover program management, research, market research, and company services. The project has a total match of \$1,475,000 provided by various sources.

### **George Mason Small Business Development Center: Expansion of ICAP Mentor Network (Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9)** *(Region 7 Primary)*

The project will expand the network of ICAP mentors by creating four new full-time positions to provide services to support start-ups and early stage companies to access funding, develop strategic plans, acquire talent, access SBIR grants or angel/venture investments and launch new products.

George Mason SBDC was awarded \$882,794 in GO Virginia funds. The project has a total match of \$441,415.

## Appendix 5: Revision Log

Changes made to this document are captured in the chart below.

Date	Name/Org.	Revision Type	Reason
<b>August 25, 2017</b>	S. Blevins/UVA Wise	Version 1 – 2017 GD Plan	Original
<b>September 15, 2017</b>	S. Blevins/UVA Wise	Version 2 – 2017 GD Plan	Incorporated Feedback from Regional Council
<b>December 30, 2018</b>	R. Lee/UVA Wise	Version 3 – 2017 GD Plan	Chmura update to quantitative data analysis – July 2018
<b>August 1, 2019</b>	S. Blevins/UVA Wise	Version 1 – 2019 GD Plan	Original
<b>December 15, 2021</b>	K. Hunter/UVA Wise	Version 1 – 2021 GD Plan	Original
<b>April 16, 2024</b>	J. Nichols/UVA Wise	Version 1 – 2024 GD Plan	Original
<b>October 16, 2025</b>	J. Nichols/UVA Wise	Version 1 – 2025 GD Plan	Original