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# Governor Northam Announces More Than \$4.4 Million to Revitalize Communities Across Virginia

## Grants will support entrepreneurs and boost local economies

**RICHMOND**—Governor Ralph Northam today announced that local business owners and community organizations will benefit from more than \$4.4 million in grants for 33 investment projects across the Commonwealth.

These projects will create and support business development, economic recovery, and the redevelopment of industrial and commercial structures.

“This is about renovating old buildings, investing in neighborhoods, and launching new businesses,” **said Governor Northam.** “These projects will greatly benefit Virginia’s local economies and business owners.”

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development administers these important programs, as well as some American Rescue Plan funds.

The Industrial Revitalization Fund leverages local and private resources to redevelop deteriorated structures. This creates more long-term employment opportunities and supports infrastructure and economic revitalization.

Community Business Launch grants help prepare businesses for success. Entrepreneurs can receive training and help with developing business plans.

The Virginia Statewide Business District Resurgence Grant supports historically economically disadvantaged communities and business districts that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

“This funding will expand job growth, nurture entrepreneurial ecosystems, and provide support to communities most affected by the pandemic,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball**. “Supporting this funding means supporting the Commonwealth’s small businesses and an economic future that works for all Virginians.”

### **2022 Industrial Revitalization Fund Awardees:**

#### **VUMAC Adaptive Reuse: Boutique Hotel | \$600,000**

##### *Town of Blackstone*

Blackstone Hotel Partners is rehabilitating a former women’s college into a boutique hotel with 109 rooms, a restaurant, microbrewery, gift shop, and movie theater. The funding will support public improvements, including water and sewer lines, stormwater solutions, sidewalks and curbs, electrical service, and a backup generator for the property. The project is expected to create 25 full-time equivalent positions, 35 jobs in total.

#### **Hotel Petersburg | \$600,000**

##### *City of Petersburg*

The city of Petersburg will renovate a 65-room hotel that was originally built in 1915. The owner, Tabb Street Development, will operate the facility in conjunction with Retro Hospitality, who has experience with boutique hotels in the region. The project is expected to create 60 full-time and 40 part-time jobs.

#### **Carver Food Incubator and Community Kitchen | \$470,000**

##### *Culpeper County*

The former George Washington Carver Regional High School, located on Route 15 in Culpeper, was constructed in 1948 and served as the regional high school for African American students. Culpeper County is renovating the property to become a cultural, agricultural, and vocational business incubator with educational and research facilities. The funding will support the construction of a commercial kitchen, which will be used as a food business incubator, providing food truck services, a point source for locally grown products, and a community education kitchen. The George Washington Carver Food Enterprises Center will manage the kitchen. The project is expected to create 28-38 full-time positions.

#### **2510 Jefferson Avenue | \$250,000**

##### *City of Newport News*

The city of Newport News will renovate a 1930-building into retail and office space. The Newport News Economic Development Authority acquired this property in June 2020. Since the acquisition, the city has created the Critical Community Improvements Plan, which outlines the plan for the 2510 Jefferson Avenue building. The project is expected to create and/or support 11 full-time positions.

### **2022 Community Business Launch Awardees:**

#### **RDA Dream Launch Entrepreneurship Program | \$90,000**

##### *City of Danville*

The Downtown Danville Association will organize a nine-week business training series, followed by a business plan pitch competition, focused on North Union/Spring Street, a historically Black commercial district adjacent to downtown Danville. Downtown Danville

Association and its many partner organizations will focus on business types that serve the North Union neighborhood and will engage in outreach to identify potential entrepreneurs fitting with both the history and future of the area. At completion, the project will train more than 85 entrepreneurs, create or expand three businesses, and create at least five jobs.

### **Uptown Partnership Community Business Launch | \$90,000**

#### *City of Martinsville*

Uptown Partnership, in partnership with the Advancement Foundation, will host a 12-week business workshop series, followed by a business plan pitch competition, focused on Uptown Martinsville. Uptown Partnership recently completed a retail market analysis in 2021 and will use that information to guide its entrepreneurial outreach strategies, with a specific emphasis on small-scale manufacturing businesses and retail catering to the needs of uptown residents. At completion, the project will create or expand three businesses and create at least five jobs.

### **Town of Bedford Business Launch | \$65,000**

#### *Town of Bedford*

The town of Bedford, in partnership with the Advancement Foundation, will host a 12-week series of business planning workshops culminating in a two-week pitch competition, focusing on entrepreneurs seeking to open in Centertown Bedford. Bedford aims to diversify its retail business mix with a focus on small-scale manufacturing businesses that offer retail shoppers the experience of watching products being made. At completion, Bedford will create or expand three businesses and create at least five jobs.

### **Bristol Community Business Launch | \$60,000**

#### *City of Bristol*

Believe in Bristol will host a six-week business training series followed by a business plan pitch competition, focused on downtown Bristol. Believe in Bristol recently embarked on an assessment of small-scale manufacturers and would like to emphasize the addition of these types of retails to downtown. At completion, Believe in Bristol will create or expand three businesses and create at least five jobs.

### **Wood Avenue Revitalization | \$45,000**

#### *Town of Big Stone Gap*

The town of Big Stone Gap will host a six-week business training series followed by a business plan pitch competition, focused on Wood Avenue in the historic downtown area of Big Stone Gap. Big Stone Gap will focus on specialty retail and restaurants to fill a critical mass of vacant properties in order to turn around a highly visible area of the community. At completion, the project will create or expand three businesses and create at least five jobs.

### **Homegrown for Hopewell | \$45,000**

#### *City of Hopewell*

Hopewell Downtown Partnership, in partnership with Virginia State University, will host a six-week business workshop series, followed by a business plan pitch competition focused on downtown Hopewell. Hopewell Downtown Partnership will focus on businesses that will fill gaps in available services for residents and visitors to Hopewell, such as fast casual dining, specialty grocery, outdoor recreation outfitters, and/or a small conference center/hotel. At completion, the project will create or expand three businesses and create at least five jobs.

### **Scottsville Community Business Launch | \$40,000**

### *Town of Scottsville*

The town of Scottsville, in partnership with the Community Investment Collaborative, will host an eight-week business workshop series followed by a business plan pitch competition, focused on downtown Scottsville. The town of Scottsville recently completed an assessment of its retail and housing market, identifying several retail business categories with opportunity for growth, such as restaurants, general merchandise, grocery, and specialty retail. At completion, the project will create or expand three businesses and create at least five jobs.

### **2022 Virginia Statewide Business District Resurgence Grant Awardees**

#### **“Made in Bristol:” Small-Scale Manufacturing for State Street | \$150,000**

##### *City of Bristol*

Building on its small-scale manufacturing strategic plan, the city of Bristol will initiate a Made in Bristol membership program open to any and all small-scale producers in the Bristol area. Members will have access to training, technical assistance and capacity-building grants specific to the needs of small producers. SWaM businesses will be particularly encouraged to participate. This project seeks to promote stability and growth among existing businesses, providing direct assistance to at least 20 businesses.

#### **North Main Hill Neighborhood Business District Revitalization Program | \$150,000**

##### *Downtown Danville Association | City of Danville*

The Downtown Danville Association will partner with the Danville Regional Foundation and the city of Danville Office of Economic Development to pilot a new neighborhood commercial district revitalization program in historically BIPOC neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, such as North Main Hill. The organization aims to develop an action plan to provide services to an expanded footprint including but not limited to business assistance, marketing, façade improvement programs, and place making rooted in economic inclusion. Upon completion, this will increase access to capital, loans, and grants, increase business training and start-ups, execute at least one resident-driven project, and lay the groundwork for infrastructure improvements such as WiFi hotspots.

#### **Black Entrepreneurial Advancement and Community Opportunity Network (BEACON) Incubator Project | \$150,000**

##### *New Hill Development Corporation | City of Charlottesville*

New Hill Development Corporation, in partnerships with the city of Charlottesville, Community Investment Collaborative, Operation Hope, and the Virginia Department of Health, will develop a business accelerator, commercial kitchen, and co-working space for Black food and beverage entrepreneurs in and around the Starr Hill community of Charlottesville. New Hill CDC plans to conduct entrepreneur identification and outreach, rent a commercial kitchen, provide culinary business training, conduct a pop-up restaurant event and organize a competitive startup grant program. Upon completion, New Hill CDC will assist at least 24 businesses, create 10 new businesses, create at least 12 jobs, and build organizational capacity for growing the project even further.

#### **Chamberbrook Arts and Business District Master Plan Activation | \$150,000**

##### *Real Chances Inc. | City of Richmond*

Real Chances Inc., in partnership with the Storefront for Community Design and the FORM Coalition, will conduct master planning and early stage implementation for the Chamberbrook Arts and Business District at the northern gateway into the city of Richmond. Real Chances Inc.

will work with design and planning consultants to develop a master plan and architectural pattern book for Chamberbrook, organize pop-up retail and place making projects, offer business start-up training/coaching, and administer business start-up grants. Upon completion, Real Chances will complete a master plan, develop an e-commerce platform, assist five businesses, and improve six commercial buildings in the Chamberbrook district.

### **Entrepreneurial Support Hub for Businesses on Williamson Road Corridor | \$150,000**

Williamson Road Area Business Association | City and County of Roanoke and County of Salem  
Williamson Road Area Business Association (WRABA) will develop a new shared workspace/incubator adjacent to WRABA's existing space to serve a multi-lingual, multinational population of highly-motivated entrepreneurs hoping to open businesses along the Williamson Road corridor. WRABA plans to complete its facility buildout, execute start-up business training, and install public artworks that communicate the purpose of the hub.

### **Waynesboro Renaissance | \$116,000**

*Waynesboro Economic Development | City of Waynesboro*

Building on the city's strategy to support small business recovery downtown and create a path to a Waynesboro renaissance, funding will be used for façade improvement grants, business training and technical assistance, marketing/promotions, and a downtown housing study. This project will assist businesses in historically economically disadvantaged communities, drive traffic to existing businesses in their historic main street, and prepare the area for new investment.

### **757 Makerspace - Peninsula Expansion | \$100,000**

*Economic Development Authority of the City of Hampton | City of Hampton*

A spin-off of the successful 757 Makerspace in Norfolk, this project creates access to the same resources North of the James and expands access to these resources closer to innovators affiliated with NASA, Langley AFB, Newport News Shipbuilding, VIMS, Hampton University, William & Mary, and all of their suppliers. This project will be executed in partnership with Hampton Public Schools' vocational/technical programs, including BIPOC students and their families. Through the StartWheel online platform, they will promote entrepreneurial activities and early-stage startup businesses in the area.

### **B-Cubed Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Expansion | \$100,000**

*City of Harrisonburg and County of Rockingham*

The city of Harrisonburg, as part of a multi-partner effort called B-Cubed (Black- and Brown-owned Business) Growth Program, will support next stage growth and adaptation of its Bricks and Clicks business retention program to focus on the needs of underserved entrepreneurs who will benefit from more coaching, larger grants to overcome undercapitalization, and less instruction in institutional settings. The B-Cubed Growth Program will assist 30 businesses and provide 30 grants.

### **Expansion of Bloom Co-Working Space and Incubator | \$100,000**

*Partnership Development Foundation | City of Portsmouth*

The Partnership Development Foundation will support the expansion of the Bloom coworking and incubator space in Portsmouth, which will provide local startups and micro-companies targeted resources and educational programming to grow into successful businesses. Bloom is currently providing subsidized space and services for small-business owners to help them recover and pivot as necessary. This space will target Portsmouth small businesses and veterans,

minorities, persons with a disability, and women. This incubation and co-working space seeks to increase the availability of co-working space, increase the revenue of associated businesses and individuals, and increase job creation.

### **Filling Street Level Vacancies in Arts and Culture District | \$100,000**

*Venture Richmond | City of Richmond*

Venture Richmond will identify and fill vacant or underutilized retail storefronts along the Broad Street section of Richmond's Arts and Culture District damaged during the social uprisings of the summer of 2020 and recruit existing small, women, and minority (SWaM) and immigrant-owned businesses to fill vacancies in the district. Building and business owners will be eligible for façade improvement grants from the city of Richmond. New start-ups will be eligible for business training and mentoring through the Metropolitan Business League and grants for specific reimbursable expenses.

### **We Care Recovery and Small Business Resiliency | \$100,000**

*Metropolitan Business League | City of Richmond and County of Henrico*

The Metropolitan Business League (MBL) will expand the capacity of its existing "We Care" recovery and resiliency project in order to provide relief funds for small businesses impacted by COVID-19 and social justice demonstrations. Through this program, MBL provides direct grants, financial counseling, technical assistance, and corporate training to businesses in the Richmond metropolitan region, directly serving Black and Brown business owners in low- to moderate-income areas.

### **Childcare Business Support in the Historic Triangle | \$100,000**

*Inner Peace Coalition Inc. | City of Williamsburg and County of James City*

Inner Peace Coalition Inc., in partnership with James City County Department of Social Services, will provide business support services to small, woman-, minority- and immigrant-owned businesses in the Historic Triangle area, with an emphasis on businesses providing child care services. Inner Peace Coalition Inc. plans to conduct outreach, training and ongoing mentorship to new and existing business owners. The organization will train at least 150 entrepreneurs and create at least two new businesses.

### **Small Scale Developer Education and Activation | \$95,000**

*Hopewell Downtown Partnership | City of Hopewell*

Hopewell Downtown Partnership (HDP) will train a cohort of small, woman, and minority developers to tackle projects in Hopewell, update Hopewell's retail market analysis, and create a new business investment guide. Hopewell Downtown Partnership plans to organize a series of small-scale real estate development trainings, including advanced training and coaching for owners with active projects that are ready to begin right away. Hopewell Downtown Partnership will train 120 small-scale developers, including at least 30 of whom will be small, woman, and minority developers benefiting from scholarships.

### **Lawrenceville Merchants Assistance Program | \$88,000**

*IDA of Brunswick | County of Brunswick*

The IDA of Brunswick will provide SWaM retail merchants with technical assistance and mentoring, joint marketing opportunities and the development of a shared e-commerce platform for Brunswick County merchants and makers, with an emphasis on Lawrenceville. This project will leverage existing entrepreneurial initiatives to provide additional impact.

### **Southeast Commercial District Business Assistance | \$86,000**

*Newport News Economic Development Authority | City of Newport News*

The Newport News Economic Development Authority (NNEDA) will support existing small business growth and entrepreneurship in the southeast commercial district, a historically underserved and disadvantaged area of Newport News. In partnership with the Women's Empowerment Development, NNEDA plans to offer hands-on technical and financial assistance to small businesses in the community as well as distributed commercial locations within the broader Southeast Community.

### **Strategic Plan for Inclusion of Fifth Street Corridor in Downtown Lynchburg Association Service Area | \$64,000**

*Downtown Lynchburg Association | City of Lynchburg*

Downtown Lynchburg Association (DLA) will conduct a strategic action plan to expand DLA's service district to include Fifth Street, a historically Black commercial district. Downtown Lynchburg Association plans to follow up its strategic planning with place making projects such as murals, interpretive signs, and beautification along with enhanced supportive services for Fifth Street businesses and property owners.

### **Southeast Community Commercial District Strategic Action Plan | \$50,000**

*City of Newport News*

Womens Empowerment Development Inc., (WED), in partnership with the city of Newport News Economic Development Authority (NNEDA), will develop a strategic action plan for the Southeast Community in the historic Jefferson Avenue and Chestnut Avenue commercial districts. WED will conduct an assessment of potential gaps and opportunities to support the business ecosystem and to provide an inclusive framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization and vitality, entrepreneurship readiness, and start-up SWaM business support services.

### **B-Force Accelerator | \$50,000**

*Black Brand | City of Portsmouth*

Black Brand will expand capacity of the existing microenterprise assistance, B-Force Accelerator program. This expansion will provide technical assistance and training workshops to early stage minority business owners to increase their ability to access capital, scale up, increase revenue, decrease expenses, and develop a professional network.

### **Gainsboro Neighborhood Business Assistance Program | \$50,000**

*City of Roanoke*

The city of Roanoke will complete a needs assessment for merchants in the Gainesboro commercial district. The results of the assessment will inform program design for grant and technical assistance in the historically underserved neighborhood commercial district adjacent to downtown Roanoke.

### **Welcome Back to Business | \$50,000**

*South Hill Chamber of Commerce | Town of South Hill*

The South Hill Chamber of Commerce will develop a public space for outdoor dining and events, façade improvement program, business technical assistance and training, and the development of a marketing campaign to draw customers to the central business district. This program seeks to expand the availability of business support services to historically disadvantaged business owners in the community. The South Hill Chamber of Commerce will

serve 30 businesses, improve 10 downtown businesses, and provide assistance to ten historically disadvantaged businesses through this initiative.

**Commercial Real Estate Rehabilitation Incentive Enhancements | \$50,000**

*Town of South Hill*

The town of South Hill seeks to further capitalize existing façade improvement funds for building owners and offer reimbursable grants for business interior buildout projects. This project will directly support 10 building improvement projects and will include outreach and engagement to ensure the inclusion of traditionally underserved business owners in these initiatives while leveraging existing business incentives to create a more resilient business district.

**Start Smart Education for Early Stage Low and Moderator Income Entrepreneurs | \$10,000**

*BizWorks | County of Chesterfield*

BizWorks Enterprise Center will organize and host a series of small-scale business startup classes and mentoring focused on low- and moderate-income residents of the Route 1 corridor of Chesterfield County. BizWorks Enterprise Center plans to conduct extensive outreach to nearby residents. Biz Works will offer business training and mentoring and host a business plan competition. BizWorks Enterprise Center will train 30 students, retain and strengthen 10 businesses, create at least five jobs, and generate \$50,000 in loans.

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