



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

AT A GLANCE ...

Our Goals

To raise awareness of Virginia's significant new economic challenges and opportunities;

To mobilize business, education, and community leaders in each part of Virginia to work collaboratively for economic development, job creation, and career readiness; and

To make Virginia's state government a strong and effective catalyst for this strategic, job-focused regional collaboration through financial incentives, technical support, and other assistance.

Why This, Why Now?

AN URGENT NEED FOR PRIVATE-SECTOR GROWTH. For the first time in a half-century, Virginia is trailing the Nation in economic recovery and job creation. Steep cutbacks in defense and other federal programs have exposed our over-dependence on public-sector and government-contractor jobs. For current and future generations to enjoy the kind of opportunity we have experienced, Virginia urgently needs strong private-sector growth and a more diversified economy.

COLLABORATION IN VIRGINIA'S DIVERSE REGIONS. Virginia does not have a single economy; our state's economy is the aggregate of our regions. Businesses typically provide jobs to qualified workers from throughout a region, serve customers across the region, use regional suppliers and vendors, and rely on regional transportation networks and other infrastructure. Because Virginia is a large and diverse state, the opportunities for private-sector growth vary significantly from one part of our state to another, requiring collaborative innovation among employers, entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, educators, governments, and other leaders in each region. Too often this cooperation has been lacking, causing Virginia to lag behind other states.

STATE GOVERNMENT AS A CATALYST AND PARTNER. While the innovation to spur private-sector growth must come from within each region, the Commonwealth has a vital role to play. State government aids business growth by keeping taxes and regulatory burdens low, supporting education and training, and addressing critical infrastructure needs, among other functions. But the State can and must do more to encourage strategic, job-focused collaboration in each region. Significant state funds currently flow to localities, schools, and higher education institutions; the Commonwealth should use such resources to promote joint efforts on economic and workforce development and to encourage collaboration that can improve performance and reduce costs. The State must be a reliable partner in these regional efforts, and state-funded initiatives should result in greater economic output and job creation in each region rather than reallocating market share or picking winners and losers.

5 Policy Priorities

Robust and diverse private-sector growth here in Virginia is the surest path to greater opportunity for our citizens. To achieve sustained success, initiatives to promote growth and job creation must meet the demanding test of the private marketplace. We thus seek to encourage voluntary, business-led collaboration on economic and workforce development in each region, with educational institutions and local governments engaging effectively as full partners. While not an exclusive list, here are five ways that state-funded incentives could have a significant positive impact on private-sector growth:

INNOVATION

The State can promote innovation and growth in each region through start-up grant support for projects that promise substantial economic impact, leverage significant local, private, and other investment, and reflect regional cooperation on industry sector growth, alignment of education and training programs with employer demand, entrepreneurship, and other private sector-focused growth strategies.

INVESTMENT

The State can encourage cooperation rather than competition among localities in the recruitment of new business investment and jobs to each region by returning a portion of the state tax revenues generated by projects to regions where localities share economic development-related costs and revenues.

IMPROVEMENT

The State can provide financial incentives for efficiency-enhancing and cost-saving collaboration between and among local governments, school divisions, and higher education institutions, thereby improving performance, reducing pressures to increase the size and cost of government, and freeing up tax dollars for opportunity-focused initiatives in education, job training, and economic development.

INVENTION

The State can encourage inventions and discoveries that lead to commercially viable products and services by providing matching-fund support for labs, equipment, and other research-related needs, thereby leveraging private and other R&D investments and generating economic benefits for the region.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The State can invest in capital projects of regional or broader significance that will produce strong returns in private-sector growth, diversification, and job creation through improved education and job-skills training, research, business site development, communications, and other vital infrastructure.

GO Virginia, an initiative launched by the Virginia Business Higher Education Council and the Council on Virginia's Future, will help generate private-sector growth and job opportunities in every part of our Commonwealth. ★ **Bipartisan and business-led**, it provides a regional framework for implementing other private sector-focused economic strategies, including Governor McAuliffe's "New Virginia Economy" plan, the General Assembly's "Top Jobs" legislation, and "Blueprint Virginia" (Virginia Chamber). ★ **Incentive-based and voluntary**, it calls for NO new taxes, layers of government, local mandates, or changes in local authority.

Our focus is expanding job opportunities for all Virginians.

To join the coalition or learn more, visit www.GOVirginia.org today!