



# **GO Virginia Region One Grant Application Guidelines**

**Updated: February 1, 2020**

Note: Grant guidelines will remain in effect until December 31, 2020, or until GO Virginia guidelines are revised per the State Board or the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

***The GO Virginia Region One Council is accepting proposals for funding. Region One includes the Counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe; and the Cities of Bristol, Galax, and Norton.***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Virginia Initiative for Growth and Opportunity (GO Virginia) was created by the passage of legislation during the 2016 General Assembly session. The objective of the GO Virginia initiative is to promote the creation of high wage careers, private sector job growth, and diversification across the Commonwealth through incentivized regional collaboration. GO Virginia funding seeks to grow jobs paying higher than the regional annual average wage which for Region One is \$34,678.

All proposals must align with the [Region One Growth and Diversification Plan](#) (“the Plan”), which prioritized regional needs and opportunities. The Plan will serve as a guide to applicants in identifying actionable grant requests. All projects must be completed within two years of funding. Payment of grant funds will be made upon the achievement of project milestones as outlined in the grant application.

### **PER CAPITA GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

The GO Virginia Region One Council offers two grant opportunities for applicants. For a list of current GO Virginia funded projects, please visit [DHCD’s website](#).

#### **1. ENHANCED CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS**

This Program will develop platforms to support various collaborative approaches, increase efficiency, provide a deeper and consistent level of support, assess and reduce risk, and provide more focus on broad concepts outlined in the Region One Growth and Diversification Plan. Such projects should create the opportunity for regions to share information on best practices and validate platforms that may lead to more collaboration and future grant requests with similar goals. Ultimately, enhanced capacity building projects are intended to examine how a subsequent future project grant request will be supported through the creation of this platform. Proposed enhanced capacity building projects will not have direct economic outcomes.

Applications for enhanced capacity building should include in detail:

- Inventory of existing programs with similar goals,
- Gaps in current programs that the proposed project will fill,
- The resources and structures needed to ensure the success of the enhanced building capacity initiative, and
- An exploration of how the enhanced capacity building effort could contribute to the success of associated future grant requests.

Efforts must align with the Region One Growth & Diversification Plan's targeted industries and strategies.

For enhanced capacity building projects requesting \$100,000 or less, applicants will submit an abbreviated [Administrative Approval application](#).

## **2. COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**

This Program focuses on collaborations between two or more localities focused on direct economic impacts to Region One. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to, efforts aligned with the Growth and Diversification Plan's targeted industries which include advanced manufacturing, agriculture/food & beverage manufacturing, information and emerging technologies, and energy and minerals. Specific strategies for each project initiative to support existing local companies and entrepreneurs, as well as promote investment and location of prospective industries include:

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

Please refer to [Region One Growth Strategies and Metrics](#) and [DHCD's GO Virginia Working Project Guidance](#) for additional information on project development.

The GO Virginia Region One Council reserves the right to make no funding awards or withhold funds should the proposed grant requests not meet certain minimum requirements or address the goals or purposes of the Growth and Diversification Plan.

Applicants will submit a [Per Capita application](#) for this type of project.

## **BROADBAND**

GO Virginia funds may be used to support regional planning efforts that inform and encourage private sector broadband infrastructure build out. GO Virginia funds may be used to fund middle-mile broadband infrastructure projects, including, but not limited to, fiber and conduit, that extend telecommunications networks in partnership with the private sector and focus on meeting the business needs of a community.

GO Virginia funds may not be used to support broadband projects focused on providing residential broadband service to customers (also known as “last mile”). Applicants interested in support for last-mile broadband grants should refer to the [Virginia Telecommunication Initiative \(VATI\)](#).

The Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board authorizes DHCD to accept per capita and competitive grant applications consistent with [GO Virginia Board Policy #8 – Use of GO Virginia Funds for Investments in Broadband](#).

Applicants may request funds for two types of activities related to broadband infrastructure:

1. PLANNING
  - a) Regional Planning and Broadband Strategic Design Support
  
2. IMPLEMENTATION
  - a) Middle-mile broadband infrastructure projects, including but not limited to fiber and conduit, which extend telecommunications networks, in partnership with the private sector and focus on meeting the business needs of a community, and/or
  - b) Related digital literacy and internet relevance programming connected to business growth and expansion opportunities.

#### **1. BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING GRANTS**

*Match Requirement: \$2:1 (no Local Match required)*

These regional broadband plans should present middle-mile broadband infrastructure opportunities that fill identified gaps, identify potential sources of matching funds for future implementation projects, and include a proposed timeline for implementation. The plans should include an inventory of assets (infrastructure such as cell/electric towers, employment centers, etc.), engineering designs, and cost estimates for implementation. Funds may also be used to integrate existing local plans and/or update regional plans.

Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to a planning process that engages a variety of stakeholders. Applicants should describe the outreach and engagement strategy for relevant stakeholders such as business and industry, current middle mile providers, private and public Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and/or Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs), private utility companies, public utility cooperatives, localities, regional planning organizations, and regional economic development organizations.

Applicants are encouraged to use [Commonwealth Connect’s Broadband Toolkit](#) as a resource to guide their planning activities.

Applicants will submit an enhanced capacity building (ECB) application for planning projects.

## **2. BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS**

*Match Requirement: \$1:1 (20% or \$50,000 (whichever is greater) local match required)*

Applicants pursuing grants for construction of middle-mile broadband infrastructure are encouraged to have a recently completed regional broadband plan and be applying for funds to implement one or more elements of that plan. (This does not have to be a GO Virginia-funded plan.)

Projects must have the participation of two or more localities and be developed in partnership with one or more private sector providers. Middle mile projects must develop open-access networks, allow access to the middle mile network at a competitive rate, and be available for any interested internet service provider (ISP). Applications that involve not-for-profit or cooperative model providers, as well as applications that represent an exceptional economic opportunity, are encouraged.

Projects must respond to the Region's need for middle mile infrastructure, especially as it relates to enhanced service levels for businesses in the Region's targeted sectors, and the demand for the increased middle mile capacity among the region's ISPs. Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage early and often with potential ISP customers of the middle mile project. Priority will be given to projects with committed ISP customers.

Applicants may include a project element to educate affected businesses about the impact online tools can have on their business. Applicants are encouraged to work in conjunction with local community institutions already engaging in digital literacy education, such as library systems or cooperative extension offices.

Applicants will submit a per capita or competitive application for implementation projects.

## **STATEWIDE COMPETITIVE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

As a general rule, the criteria found in the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Fund (GO Fund) Grant Scoring Guidelines shall govern the applications for grants from the statewide competitive pool as they relate to who is the applicant, administration of the grants, return on investment analysis, project performance, and the scoring criteria. Because the state-wide competitive grants, however, are expected to be larger in size and scope, several adjustments are necessary as discussed below.

### **1. LOCAL PARTICIPATION**

The Act requires any grant, regardless of whether it is from the per capita or the state-wide competitive pool, to be matched, at least dollar for dollar by non-state

appropriated sources. Local financial participation as part of that required match will also be important criteria in selecting which projects to fund. The same local match requirements apply to competitive applications. However, project proposals with greater local participation and match, both in size and the number of participating localities, will receive special priority in the competitive grant review process.

## **2. ENHANCED CAPACITY BUILDING**

It is not expected that the state-wide competitive pool will be used to fund proposals that are solely for enhanced capacity building grants. While proposals may have an initial phase that includes some enhanced capacity building activities to test-run various project approaches, grant proposals should focus on project implementation and return on investment for the Commonwealth and the regions in meeting GO Virginia policy goals that are captured in scoring criteria. The Board may make an exception to this section if there are certain project proposals that align with priorities identified in multiple growth and diversification plans and may authorize funding from this pool for studies and projects that will have a significant impact across regions and will have state-wide applicability.

## **3. ALIGNMENT WITH GROWTH & DIVERSIFICATION PLANS**

Projects seeking funding from the state-wide competitive pool should demonstrate alignment with the goals and priorities of each of the regional growth and diversification plans of the localities represented in the application. Should such alignment not exist in the existing plans, then supplemental addendums to plans that demonstrate such alignment will be required as part of the grant application.

## **4. SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS**

The Competitive Grant Application will include questions to solicit information on how the regions will interact, collaborate, and coordinate project implementation. The application will also seek to evaluate the interplay between rural and urban regions as well as the multi-regional or state-wide opportunity presented. Projects should demonstrate a benefit to more than one region or an extraordinary opportunity to the Commonwealth.

Applicants will submit a [Competitive Grant application](#) for state-wide competitive projects.

## GRANT GUIDELINES

### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Public or private entities that may pursue and administer grant funding include, but are not limited to, localities (counties, cities or towns), political subdivisions, foundations, non-profit entities, colleges and universities, other educational entities, economic development organizations, workforce boards, local governments, regional council support organizations, and other stakeholder organizations. Private companies may apply to participate in or manage a project (in cooperation with the collaborating localities and stakeholders); however, grant funds should not be used as economic development incentive payments or to promote the activities of a single entity. Grant funds are to be used to support the implementation of requests aligned with plan priorities and offer broad community benefits. Evidence of financial participation by the collaborating “localities” is required as part of any grant application and must meet the minimum threshold (outlined below) for such participation.

### **COLLABORATION**

All proposals (both Enhanced Capacity Building Program Projects and Collaborative Grant Projects) require the collaboration of at least two localities, which may be any combination of counties, cities, and towns and/or political subdivisions, public bodies corporate and politic. Political subdivisions or public bodies corporate that represent the same county or city will not be counted as a separate locality. A town may petition the GO Virginia Region One Council and Board to be counted as a separate locality from the county that it is located in.

### **FUNDING MATCH**

All grant requests for funds must be matched at least dollar for dollar by non-state appropriated sources such as non-state public entities, federal or local funds, private sources or in-kind contributions. It is the goal of the GO Virginia State Board that among the participating localities in regional collaboration, there be a local contribution of not less than 20% of the required match or \$50,000, whichever is greater, in the aggregate, per proposed project. The local contribution may come from any combination of the participating localities and political subdivisions. If the participating localities identify actions that they will take which result in cost efficiencies that provide resources for the proposed regional project, such funds shall be worth a 50% bonus in meeting the local contribution requirement. Existing investments by localities and political subdivisions that are redirected, repurposed, or refocused towards collaborative regional grant requests will count as a local match.

To meet the local contribution requirement, the application will identify the methods the participating localities have undertaken, or will undertake during the proposed grant term, to make available the required local contribution. The Board reserves the right to waive the local contribution for enhanced capacity building efforts that demonstrate an ability to benefit multiple regions or grant requests. The local contribution may take the form of cash, revenue sharing, the dedication of locally owned or controlled assets to the proposed regional project, reallocation of existing funds, in-kind contributions or other local resources. Applicants are

encouraged to meet the match requirement. If a waiver is requested, documentation is required describing efforts made to obtain the required match. For enhanced capacity building projects requesting under \$100,000, the local contribution match is not required.

## **RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

For all per capita proposals, “return on investment” should be calculated or estimated. This is one of the key measures used by the State Board in making funding allocations. The proposed return on investment not only covers direct job creation and capital investment measures, but under GO Virginia, the proposed grant requests should focus on long-term, sustainable change, economic diversification, and regional collaboration. Some measures of success may be behavioral and thus, harder to measure. Further, GO Virginia expects that funds will have a broad community benefit that supports activities across local boundaries.

To calculate the anticipated return on investment for proposed grant requests, applicants should:

1. Outline the anticipated jobs and capital investment that may accrue from the project over a three-year period after the project is complete, as well as over a longer term.
2. Outline the anticipated state and local tax revenues that will be generated as a result of the proposed activity. Please note that the State Board will give preference to those applications that can demonstrate that the GO Virginia portion of grant funds are recouped within three years; however, projects that may have a smaller return in the initial phases, but a larger anticipated longer-term impact may receive special consideration. For further guidance, please reference the [DHCD ROI Slides](#).
3. Outline other measures of success and financial viability (i.e. new collaborative agreements, revenue sharing, cost savings, and efficiencies).
4. Discuss previous successes involving the applicant on similar initiatives.
5.  $ROI \% = (\text{Revenues from Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment}) / \text{Cost of Investment}$ .
6. For assistance in calculating the ROI, please use the [GO VA Per Capita ROI Template](#).

## **LETTER OF INTENT**

It is recommended that organizations and entities present a letter of intent at least 30 days before the Region One application deadline if planning to apply for GO VA funding.

**The letter of intent should include the following:**

- Name of applicant, contact person and contact information
- Proposed partners and the nature of the partner support and/or role in the project
- Participating localities
- Project title and description
- Estimated total project cost and GO VA grant request

Letters of intent will provide the Region One Council an understanding of potential projects and may initiate early discussions regarding project ideas. These letters do not represent a complete application, which must be submitted by the deadlines set by the regional council.

Please send letters of intent to Kalen Hunter, GO Virginia Region One Program Director at [khunter@uvawise.edu](mailto:khunter@uvawise.edu).

### **FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Full applications for GO Virginia Region One per capita funding must be submitted 45 days before the scheduled Region One council meetings and received by 5:00 p.m. Applications meeting these criteria will be given full consideration by the Region One Council for submission to the GO Virginia State Board for review.

Applicants can mail a flash drive or submit their application through a secured online Box account. Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent, the Box account will be sent to the applicant.

Kalen Hunter

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### **2020 REGION ONE DEADLINES**

<b>Region 1 LOI Deadline</b>	<b>Region 1 Application Deadline</b>	<b>Region 1 Council Meeting</b>
Nov. 1, 2019	Dec. 2, 2019	Jan. 14, 2020
Feb. 5, 2020	March 13, 2020	April 28, 2020
April 29, 2020	May 29, 2020	July 14, 2020
July 29, 2020	Aug. 28, 2020	Oct. 20, 2020
Nov. 4, 2020	Dec. 4, 2020	TBD

***These guidelines will remain in effect until December 31, 2020, or until GO Virginia guidelines are revised per the State Board or the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. Applicants are advised to check the GO Virginia Region One website for updates ([www.goswva.org](http://www.goswva.org)).***

**During the review process, applicants may be asked to provide additional information or documents either in person or in writing.**

## GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Applications and all attachments should be created as a Word document and uploaded to the applicant's Box account, which will be set up upon receipt of the Letter of Intent.
- If recommended for funding, applications will be loaded into the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Online Portal (CAMS) by the Region One support organization, UVA Wise. This system limits answers to 6,000 characters for each question. Please attach as a separate document with your response to any question that exceeds this limit.
- All attachments, templates, and project charts are to be submitted as separate documents and should not be embedded within your response to any question. Applicants are encouraged to reference all attachments in the narrative as they pertain to each question. *Required and optional attachments and templates are included in the application and available at the GO Virginia Region One website. (<http://www.goswva.org/proposals>)*
- Any project proposal that involves In-Kind match (i.e. any goods/services that are donated or provided free of charge), must provide an In-Kind form completed by the entity that is providing the match and submitted with the application as a match.
- Please ensure the budget is accurate and includes a supporting narrative.

## GRANT SCORING CRITERIA

In determining the eligibility of the region and the amount of monies to be awarded for grant requests, the GO Virginia Board and the Region One Council will follow these weighting criteria. The GO Virginia Board reserves the right not to make an award to proposed grant requests that have a low score in one or more of the following areas:

### **Economic Impact – 35%**

- The application outlines the expected return on investment of the proposed project and the timeline for achieving that return.
- The application demonstrates the proposed project's alignment with the Region One of the Plan.
- Grant requests (submitted from smaller economic regions) that have a larger impact with the creation of higher paying jobs and economic diversification, based upon the return on investment model will receive higher scores.

- The project outlines both behavioral as well as tangible results that will come from the collaboration.
- The project focuses on industries where more than 50% of the revenue comes from out-of-state.

#### **Regional Collaboration – 30%**

- The number and percentage of localities within the region that are participating in the proposed project and the portion of the region’s population represented by the participating localities.
- Participation of the localities or regions (including interstate collaborations) that are outside of the applying region.
- Cost efficiencies, repurposing of existing funds, leveraging of existing assets, or other evidence of collaboration that can be demonstrated as a result of the proposed project.
- The amount of involvement in the project by businesses, colleges and universities, and other public/private entities within the region in the conceptualization of and the implementation of the project.
- The amount, timing, and form of the proposed project match that outlines the depth of the commitment by the public/private funding partners to the effort.
- Inventory existing grant requests or programs with similar goals to ensure the proposed project is not duplicative of, but additive to, other efforts to support economic diversification and the creation of more higher-paying jobs.

#### **Project Readiness – 20%**

- Project application demonstrates that the project partners have the capability to successfully execute the project.
- Project application demonstrates that the regional council has consulted with subject matter experts regarding the efficacy and viability of the proposal.
- The project application outlines how the project may be coordinated with existing efforts in the region.
- The project application fully analyzes the barriers to successful implementation and other associated risks along with a plan to overcome them.
- Project application reviews any prerequisite activities undertaken by the collaborating parties to increase efficiency with regard to program delivery and to ensure a deeper and consistent level of support for the project once launched.
- Project application demonstrates the project partners, including the lead public or private administering entity, have sufficient financial management and personnel to ensure compliance with the grant agreement.

#### **Project Sustainability – 15%**

- A plan for how a project will be sustained after grant funds are exhausted.
- Demonstrated ability to meet the project performance metrics and to take remedial actions in the event those measures are not achieved.
- Demonstrate leverage above the required amounts from any source.