



GO Virginia Region One: IT Focus Group #3

April 15, 2019

Infrastructure

1. Leveraging broad band access already in region; looking at having a network of coworking sites; start with 3 coworking spaces and accelerators:
 - a. Virginia Highlands
 - b. Wytheville Community College
 - c. Oxbow Center
2. Grow our own entrepreneurs and attract virtual jobs
3. Leveraging technical programs in K-12
 - a. Do the research to see what employers need
 - b. Mobile stem labs; leveraging the Ignite Program
4. 5G deployment in area— set up the infrastructure to attract IT firms
 - a. Equip the 3 centers above with 5G

What overlaps from other groups?

- Bridge the gaps between workforce companies and educators—regular dialogue needed
- Mobile labs and workspaces

Start Ups

1. Feasibility study for targeted startups – we don't really understand what IT start-ups have the most potential to do well; what services, products would be most successful in the current environment? Need to do a feasibility study to understand how to maximize our investments.
2. Start-up work spaces – what do they need—how open is it?
3. 276 Seed Fund – work with other funding agencies to give seed money up to 25K to start ups. Maybe provide some dollar amount of incentives that is like a revolving loan fund (the money goes back to the fund when paid back— additional businesses can be funded)
4. Need angel investors or community foundations to work with number 3 above

What overlaps from other groups?

- Incentivizing companies to hire people in this area; need to have access to capital
- Angel fund or community foundation needed as the other half of the incentive

Workforce

1. Current needs and future needs. Lot of conversation on future needs and how to get students engaged; internships; mobile labs
2. GO VA assets—take 24 months to further research and define what things are going well and what gaps persist; then decide a second proposal to scale to close gaps

- a. Research, pilot, scale (process)
3. Need a way to deploy students to teach programs and classes in K-12 systems (IT). Specific need presented is programming in the school systems.

What overlaps from other groups?

- Mobile labs (coding)
- Look at capacity building proposal – quality and complexity: can it be implemented by the school systems? It would evaluate how to build awareness and identify the number of students that pursue a technology career path (best practices in rural America); CGI—in order to attract firms, we need to be able to say, “come to our high schools and you’ll see what we’re doing to build the pipeline.”
- Need a champion to go forward on all these –a single point of contact.
- Capacity Building needed to understand the current state of IT education
- Co-worker accelerator; capital access
- Getting to the ‘How?’ Regular dialog between workforce and employers and education