



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

Legislative Fact Sheet

Updated as of 2/2/2016

What is GO Virginia?

The Virginia Initiative for Growth and Opportunity in Each Region, known as **GO Virginia**, is a business-led, bipartisan game-changing initiative that will provide a new framework for strengthening the economy in each region of Virginia through enhanced collaboration by business, education, and local government encouraged and incentivized by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

An engaged business community in each region can provide leadership in cooperation with local government and educational officials to promote private-sector expansion in high-growth clusters, help small and large businesses find the qualified workers they need to grow, expand job opportunities for Virginians in the private sector, and make tax dollars go farther through greater efficiency and less duplication.

To encourage this business-led collaboration in each of Virginia's distinctive regions, GO Virginia seeks financial and technical support from the Commonwealth that will be matched by private, local, and other resources, providing a catalyst for projects that will encourage private-sector growth across a region or broader area rather than benefiting particular businesses.

To learn more, visit GO Virginia's website at www.govirginia.org.

What is GO Virginia proposing this session?

GO Virginia has advanced five policy priorities for the 2016 General Assembly session. Two of the proposals require legislation, which is described on the next page. Four of the five require budget activity and are supported in the Executive Budget proposal submitted by the Governor in December.

INNOVATION

State grants (GO! Grants) that leverage local, private, and other investment in key regional initiatives and industry sectors.

\$38.4 million is included in the introduced budget; legislation is required. (SB 449 / HB 834)

INVESTMENT

Incentives for localities to cooperate rather than compete with each other on economic development.

Funding will come entirely from future project revenues; legislation is required. (SB 459 / HB 846)

IMPROVEMENT

Cost-saving collaboration by localities, school divisions, and colleges.

Criteria for the GO! Grants program described above encourage such collaboration; the introduced budget also includes \$5 million to promote collaboration among colleges and school divisions.

INVENTION

Investment in research leading to new business ventures.

\$140 million in combined general funds and bonds for capital investment are included in the introduced budget.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Capital projects with regional economic impact.

The introduced budget reflects the Governor's proposed bond package totaling \$2.43 billion; projects with regional economic impact are included in the package.

What are GO Virginia's two pending legislative proposals? _____

GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY GRANTS (GO! GRANTS)

Senate Bill 449 (Chief patrons: Sen. Tommy Norment; Sen. Janet Howell)

House Bill 834 (Chief patrons: Del. Kirk Cox; Del. Luke Torian)

GO! Grants provide start-up funding, to be matched by local and private resources, for transformational projects that boost private-sector growth and reflect collaboration among business, education, and at least two local governments.

The program is administered by a business-led state board (Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board) that also includes the money committee chairs, members of the cabinet, and additional legislators.

Business-led regional councils certified by the state board submit the grant proposals which may include multiple collaborative projects among localities from within the region. The regional councils include representation from local governments, educational institutions, and local and regional economic development and planning organizations.

Regional councils contract with a support organization (public or private, new or existing) to provide administrative support and project oversight rather than creating new bureaucracy. They also contract for economic and workforce gap analyses required to support their grant proposals.

Grants are based on objective evaluation criteria established by the state board, are limited in duration (typically 3-5 years), and continue only if audit, performance, and economic impact criteria are met.

Regional boundaries are established by the state board, based generally on existing planning district lines but aggregated to reduce the total number of regions to 8-10. Flexibility is provided so that localities can collaborate across regional boundaries if they choose. Inter-regional and interstate collaboration (where beneficial to Virginia) is encouraged.

The state board allocates a portion of the funds to each region based on population and administers an unallocated portion on a statewide competitive basis. In addition, a small portion of the total funds may be used to support the regional council's initial organization efforts, economic and skills gap analyses, and project validation.

Projects that promote efficiency and cost savings through local collaboration may be included in grant proposals, and documented savings may be credited toward the required local match.

In addition to administering the GO! Grant program, the business-led state board and regional councils may be used to evaluate or administer other state-funded economic initiatives to ensure maximum positive impact on private-sector growth and job creation.



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Virginia Growth & Opportunity Act

HB 834 (Cox/Torian) / SB 449 (Norment/Howell)

Organizational Flow Chart

Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board

Board Duties

- Establishes council boundaries
- Certifies council formation
- Develops grant guidelines
- Advises on best practices
- Makes grant awards

Council Activities

- Certifies that regional analysis and support services are in place
- Evaluates proposed projects and submits grant applications
- Oversees and reports on project compliance/performance

Regional Councils

Council Actions

- Analyzes region to identify key growth opportunities
- Prepares skills gap analysis
- Solicits collaborative projects within region
- Validates and prioritizes proposed projects
- Contracts for economic analyses and support services
- Ensures compliance with grant guidelines

Project-Related Actions

- Submits collaborative project proposals
- Submits business plan and performance metrics for projects
- Identifies private, local and other funds leveraged
- Implements projects and reports on performance

Collaborative Projects (involving business, education, and at least two localities)



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Virginia Collaborative Economic Development Act

HB 846 (Hugo/James/Minchew) / SB 459 (Ruff/Saslaw)
Organizational Flow Chart

