



## Updates from the Office of Economic Development

### GO Cook Program Receives State Award



At last week's Spring Conference, the **Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA)** announced the winners of the annual Community Economic Development Awards, with the City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development (OED) receiving overall Honorable Mention recognition for the GO Cook program. Winners of the VEDA Community Economic Development Awards go on to compete on a regional level through the Southern Economic Development Council.

**GO Cook** is an intensive 6-week workforce training program designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed for entry-level careers in the culinary field, while also giving them the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials that will enhance their career opportunities. While the program is open to all, priority is given to individuals from low-income backgrounds and those who may have barriers to employment, such as a history of incarcerations, providing these individuals with the potential to travel meaningful career paths in an in-demand profession they enjoy.

GO Cook has proven its success since 2018 having now held 20 training cohorts with over 100 graduates. The program is a public-private collaboration between OED and training provider **Culinary Concepts AB**. To learn more about GO Cook please contact Jenny Biche at [bichej@charlottesville.gov](mailto:bichej@charlottesville.gov) or (434) 970-3117.

### Available Property Spotlight

**1140 East Market Street** offers a unique opportunity to lease recently renovated office space in the downtown area, just a few minutes' walk to the historic Downtown Mall, City Hall, Court Square, and other amenities. The property offers executive and standard private office options for individuals, as well as a three-office suite for companies needing slightly more room. Amenities include exposed brickwork, floor-to-ceiling windows, and on-site parking. High-speed internet and utilities are included in the monthly lease rate. For more information on how you can secure one of these spaces for your business needs, contact Jane Hammel of Frank Hardy Sotheby's International Realty at (717) 575-9019 or [jhammel@frankhardy.com](mailto:jhammel@frankhardy.com).



Find information on other available properties in the City of Charlottesville by visiting the Office of Economic Development's "**Sites & Buildings**" webpage. If you have commercial, retail, or industrial space available for lease or sale, let us know by emailing property information and any marketing flyer to [ecodev@charlottesville.gov](mailto:ecodev@charlottesville.gov).

### Ready To Work Employer Spotlight: Martin Horn



Ready to Work is a free workforce training program that equips jobseekers with essential soft skills and connects them to participating Ready to Work City employers for guaranteed interviews. Partner

employers are carefully chosen for offering competitive wages, strong compensation packages, accessible entry-level opportunities, and clear pathways for advancement and professional growth.

One of these standout employers is **Martin Horn**.

For decades, Martin Horn has been Central Virginia's leading general contractor—and they're continuing to grow! From construction to project management, they're actively seeking dedicated, hard-working individuals to join their dynamic team. Martin Horn offers industry-leading benefits, competitive pay, and a collaborative, welcoming workplace culture.

Their commitment extends beyond the job—Martin Horn is deeply invested in their team and the Charlottesville community. With over 40 years in business and more than 80 employees, they've built a reputation for excellence. The average employee tenure is over 10 years—five times the industry average—and they boast a 9/10 employee satisfaction score.

At Martin Horn, no matter your background or starting point, hard work and drive are recognized and rewarded with real opportunities to grow into high-level careers.

Ready to Work and Martin Horn are ready to invest in your future. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Ready to Work program and explore Martin Horn's current open positions [here](#).

## Evolve - 2025 Tom Tom Festival

It's April and that means it's time for the 13th annual **Tom Tom Festival**. Taking place April 16th through 20th, this year's event theme will encourage the community to embrace new adaptations to the ways we collectively think, live, and lead, as we collectively **EVOLVE** into an even better Charlottesville for residents businesses, and visitors alike. Tickets are available for the conference sessions and for select networking events. Whether your interests lie in civic futures, technology, entrepreneurship, wellness, or a combination of those themes, there are sure to be keynote speakers, panel discussions, and workshops, that will resonate with you through the course of the four days and beyond.



The popular Tom Tom Block Party will be back this year offering acts, performances, and shows, of various types and across multiple genres, all along the **Downtown Mall**. This year's Block Party will take place Friday night starting at 5:00 pm, and Saturday starting at noon. Don't miss your opportunity to come together with friends, family, and members of the community for a time of fun and cultural expression.

Find out everything you need to know about this year's festival on the **Tom Tom website**. We look forward to seeing you as we discover ways to **EVOLVE** together!

## Charlottesville Resource Fair Free Business Consultations!



**RESOURCE  
FAIR**

Calling all entrepreneurs and small business owners! The **CIC** Charlottesville Resource Fair is your chance to receive free, one-on-one consultations with industry professionals and service providers. Whether you're just starting out or looking to grow, this event offers expert guidance in areas such as business law, bookkeeping, marketing, social media, website design, QuickBooks, human resources, and more. You can meet with an attorney, fine-tune your branding, or get tips on streamlining

your business operations all in one place.

Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and practical advice tailored to your business needs. The fair will be held Wednesday, May 14, 2025, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Hillsdale Conference Center, located at 550 Hillsdale Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901. Pre-registration is mandatory. **Reserve** a time slot now with each expert you'd like to meet.

## LaunchPad Program Offers New Opportunity

LaunchPad is a great opportunity for entrepreneurs, artisans, and food vendors to share their products with thousands of shoppers at two of the top-rated farmers markets in the country - **Charlottesville City Market** and **Farmers Market at IX**. There is also an opportunity to participate in the City's midweek market, Farmers in the Park. In partnership with **CIC** and the City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development, this program offers free vendor space from April 6th to November 23rd. Participants pay only a small one-time registration fee of \$35 for City Market and the Park and \$25 for Farmers Market at IX. A tent, table, and two chairs are provided to help you set up with ease. Test your ideas, grow your customer base, and gain exposure in a thriving community setting. Don't miss out! **Apply today!**



## OED Fun Fact

The 13th annual Tom Tom Festival starts April 16 – 20. This year the theme is Evolve – Transforming the way we think, live and lead. There will be lots of fun activities for all ages at the Block Party on the Downtown Mall scheduled for Friday and Saturday. Be sure to check out all the events happening around town and on the Downtown Mall during for this year's Tom Tom Festival.

## Free Business Resources



The Albemarle County & City of Charlottesville Buy Local campaign highlights small businesses within the Charlottesville-Albemarle area through a multi-channel, multimedia promotional and educational campaign. To learn more about the campaign, click [here!](#)



The Central Virginia Small Business Development Center is a team of business and technical experts available to advise and assist entrepreneurs, confidentially and free of charge. They offer 1:1 assistance, curated research, access to technical experts and professionals, and timely events/training. To see upcoming SBDC events, click [here!](#)

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