



Updates from the Office of Economic Development

GO Start-Up Goes Virtual

The [Office of Economic Development's](#) popular GO Start-Up program is moving to a virtual format for the Summer 2025 cohort. GO Start-Up is a free, 4-week experience specifically designed for aspiring entrepreneurs and early-stage business owners. Each session provides insights to assist with developing your business' vision, building a brand, understanding key financial documents, and exploring the many resources available to small businesses in the Charlottesville area and beyond.



The next GO Start-Up cohort kicks off June 5th and will meet via Zoom every Wednesday from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, in a lunch-and-learn format. Participate from your home, office, or anywhere with internet access – no commute required. [Apply today](#) and take the first step toward turning your idea into a reality and growing your business!

GO Cook Cohort 20 Graduates



On Thursday, April 10, 2025, family, friends, and community members gathered at City Space to celebrate the graduation of the 20th Cohort of GO Cook. Seven students proudly completed the six-week culinary training program, earning two nationally recognized certifications from the American Hotel & Lodging Association: ServSafe and Certified Kitchen Cook.



As part of their comprehensive training, students hosted a Skills Compilation Dinner on April 8 at Oakencroft Farm and Winery. There, they showcased their talents by designing, preparing, and serving a four-course meal to an audience of friends, family, and community supporters.

Since its launch in 2018, GO Cook has helped nearly 200 graduates launch culinary careers with over 60 restaurant and hospitality partners, five universities and schools, and two hospital systems.

Ready to take the next step in your culinary journey? Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.

Congratulations to our newest graduates—we're excited to see what you cook up next!

Limited Time Early Bird Pricing for Piedmont Ascent Ends Soon

The inaugural [Piedmont Ascent](#) Business Conference is coming to the PVCC Bolick Center on Thursday, May 29th. Register by April 30th to receive Early Bird pricing of only \$15 per person, which includes lunch and access to the networking reception. Don't miss your opportunity to hear from experts as they discuss important topics for small businesses and entrepreneurs such as how businesses can leverage advances in AI to improve efficiency and effectiveness, accessing capital, the scale up process, maximizing marketing dollars, and



casting a vision for your team. Starting May 1st, ticket prices go up to \$20 so don't wait, secure your ticket by visiting the [Central Virginia Small Business Development Center Piedmont Ascent website](#) today!

Celebrate National Apprenticeship Day with Virginia Works



[National Apprenticeship Day](#) is on April 30, 2025 and Virginia Works is excited to celebrate Commonwealth-wide with their first ever Virtual Apprenticeship Expo! The event is designed to connect jobseekers with Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Whether you're just starting your career or exploring new opportunities, this Expo is a great way to discover how Registered Apprenticeships—a time-tested and highly effective work-based learning model—can

help shape your future. The event is free, but registration is required by April 30th at 10am. Click [here](#) to register and for questions email Hiring.Events@virginiaworks.gov.

Sustainability is Good Business

As we wrap up the week of Earth Day 2025, now is a good time to take a look at how your business can begin implementing sustainability practices that are not only beneficial for our environment but also good for business. Taking small steps such as turning off the lights when you leave a room, repairing leaks and dripping faucets, and unplugging “vampire electronics” when not in use, can help to limit the amount of critical resources consumed, while also reducing monthly utility bills. Consider installing bike racks to make it easier for staff members to bike to work, which frees up parking spaces for clients and visitors. The addition of EV chargers at your site encourages the use of electric vehicles and can be utilized as an employee benefit.



Whether you are looking to start small or go big, organizations such as [Community Climate Collaborative](#), the City's [Office of Sustainability](#), [Virginia Clean Cities](#), and others, have programs and resources available to assist you incorporate sustainable practices that will benefit the environment and your business. Reach out to our office, visit the [C3 Resource Hub](#), or contact these organizations directly to learn more!

National Bike Month Starts Next Week

[May is National Bike Month](#), a celebration of biking as transportation and recreation which can also be essential to our well-being and everyday lives. Join the City of Charlottesville in this nationwide celebration and get your pedals pedaling! Check out the schedule of events for the month and bring the whole family (and their bikes) along for the ride!

Opportunities for Entrepreneurs and Business Owners in Charlottesville



Whether you're new to the Charlottesville business community or a seasoned business owner, spring is the perfect time to step out, connect, and grow your network. The weather has broken, and with it comes a fresh wave of opportunities to mix, mingle, and elevate your business journey.

[The Office of Economic Development](#) invites you to Coffee and Conversations on Thursday, May 9th, from 9:30 to 10:30 AM. This casual and energizing event will connect business owners with potential new hires. Please be sure to RSVP no later than May 5th by emailing bichej@charlottesville.gov.

There are countless ways to get plugged into Charlottesville's vibrant business scene. [Entrepreneurs and Espresso](#) (CE2), hosted by the [Charlottesville Business Innovation Council](#), offers inspiring stories and valuable connections for both new and experienced entrepreneurs. [Tech on Tap](#) is a lively after-work gathering that brings together tech professionals and innovators in a relaxed

atmosphere. The [Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce](#) also offers regular programming like the [Business Women's Round Table](#), [Rising Professionals](#), and the newly launched [Commerce and Coffee](#) series starting May 21st, all designed to foster networking, learning, and collaboration.

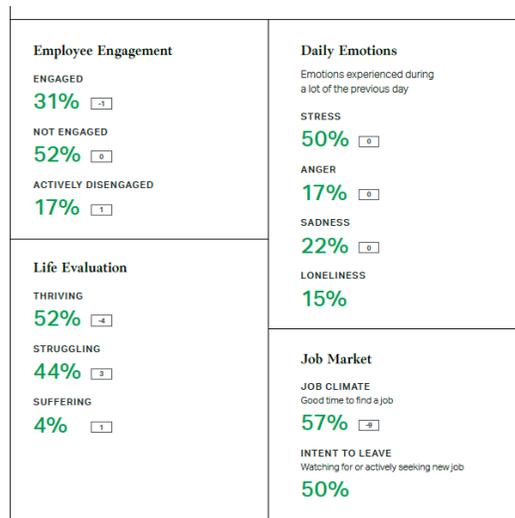
It has never been easier to connect with your local business ecosystem. Let's grow together. Share this with a friend, mark your calendars, and we'll see you around town.

Workforce Snapshot

According to Gallup's newly released [State of the Global Workplace: 2025](#) report, global employee engagement declined last year — with managers feeling the greatest strain as they tried to balance leadership expectations and employee needs.

Why does this matter? Employee engagement is a key driver of economic performance. Gallup estimates that the two-point drop in engagement in 2024 led to a staggering \$438 billion in lost productivity worldwide. If every employee globally were fully engaged, it could boost the global economy by \$9.6 trillion — roughly 9% of the world's GDP.

While factors such as income satisfaction and cost of living play a role in overall life satisfaction, it's worth remembering that most people spend the majority of their lives working — making their day-to-day work experiences a significant influence on how they evaluate their lives.



How did the U.S. perform?

Top Insights:

- Tied for the highest regional percentage of engaged employees
- Recorded the highest regional percentage of employees experiencing daily stress
- Ranked third globally for the percentage of employees who are thriving

Read the full article [here](#).

Available Property Spotlight



Does the sound of 1st floor office space in the middle of Downtown Charlottesville amenities sound interesting to you? The property at [455 2nd Street, SE](#), currently has 3,832 square feet of turnkey space available for lease. The floorplan is currently designed for a large, open co-working area and kitchenette on one side of the space with three conference rooms on the other side. Floor-to-ceiling windows allow for an abundance of natural light throughout. The property has convenient, on-site parking available. More information on this property can be obtained by [contacting Jenny Stoner](#) of Cushman & Wakefield | Thalhimier.

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.

OED Fun Fact

The first video on YouTube was uploaded 20 years ago this week. Since then, the video sharing platform has grown to become the second most-visited website in the world with over 2.5 billion

active users each month. Over 500 hours of new content is uploaded every minute and global users watch over 1 billion hours of YouTube content daily. The popular (maybe, infamous) “Baby Shark Dance” video is the most-watched video on the platform with over 15 billion views to date...doo-doo-doo-doo-doo.

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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City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development | 605 E Market St | Charlottesville, VA 22902 US

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