



## Updates from the Office of Economic Development

### Annual Black Business Expo and Juneteenth Celebration



Once again, the weather was sunny, hot, and humid, but that didn't keep people from coming out to the annual Black Business Expo and Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 16th at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center. The OED booth was present to share information about city programs and services designed to support Charlottesville entrepreneurs and small businesses. We were happy to join with other 20 businesses and organizations in the expo area where celebration visitors could shop for unique products from locally owned businesses and learn more about services non-profit partners in our area offer to support businesses and

residents alike. A community parade, live music throughout the day, food trucks, panel discussions, and a pitch competition rounded out the day's activities!

### OED Welcomes Summer Intern

This summer the Office of Economic Development is pleased to have Rafiullah "Rafi" Daudzai, join our team as a graduate intern. Originally from Afghanistan, Rafi brings a wealth of prior experience in public sector human resources and project management. He is currently taking courses in pursuit of a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Virginia's Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy. During his time with OED, Rafi will assist with translating marketing documents into Pashto and Farsi, providing insights into specific needs and challenges within the Afghan business community, and assisting with review of workforce development programs offered by OED and other partners in the Charlottesville area. We've already been impressed by Rafi's gregarious nature and "can do" approach to projects. If you see him out-and-about at various events, make sure to say hi!



### GO Cook: Launch Your Culinary Career This Summer!



GO Cook is a seven-week hands-on training program designed to jumpstart your career in the culinary field. The next session begins July 28 and runs through September 4, with classes held Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM at Culinary Concepts AB, LLC (2041 Barracks Road, Charlottesville).

Participants will have the opportunity to earn two nationally recognized credentials: ServSafe and Certified Cook. Throughout the course, students will gain real-world experience through job trails and put their new skills to the test by running a Pop-Up Restaurant.

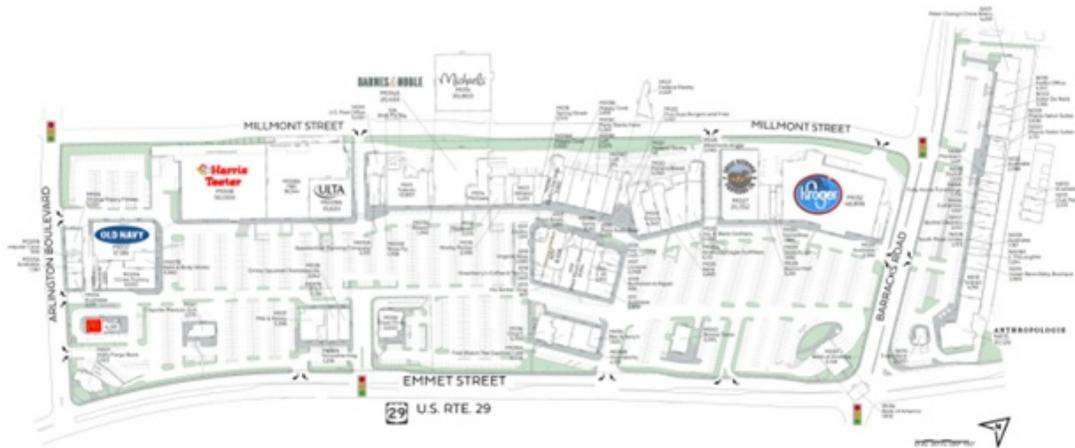
Tuition assistance is available for those who qualify. Don't miss this chance to turn your passion into a profession—

register [here](#) and take the first step toward a rewarding career in the kitchen!

## Available Property Spotlight

Have you always wanted a storefront location in a vibrant shopping center? **Barracks Road Shopping Center** currently has a limited number of available spaces for retail shops and restaurants. Ranging in size from almost 1,200 square feet to nearly 3,000 square feet, these locations place you in the middle of a bustling 495,000 square-foot shopping environment with a mix of well-known national brands and locally owned stores. Barracks Road Shopping Center sits at the intersection of Emmet Street/Rt. 29 and Barracks Road, just one mile from the University of Virginia. To learn more about available spaces and leasing options download the **marketing brochure** or contact Jenn Davidson via email [ajjdavidson@federalrealty.com](mailto:ajj davidson@federalrealty.com) or by phone at (301) 998-8344.

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).



## Youth Entrepreneurship Day

Office of Economic Development (OED) staff participated in an entrepreneurship day as part of a two-week youth-focused financial literacy and budgeting workshop, hosted as part of the University of Virginia's **Star Hill Pathways Program**.

As part of the workshop, staff shared real-life experiences from the entrepreneurial perspective, why entrepreneurship is needed, and what mindset is necessary to be successful in business. In addition, participants were given an idea of resources available to them, whether they have an idea today or come up with a brilliant business plan in the future.



**Mahogany and Friends**, a local financial literacy brand, created the curriculum for rising 7th through 9th graders, blending money lessons with games, storytelling, and interactive activities. Students learned about the pros and cons of entrepreneurship. They played a business entity relay race and trivia games fueled by plenty of candy and bonus points.

The class ended with a pitch competition judged by OED staff. Students utilized the knowledge gained from presentations and games to highlight local problems. They then presented how their business would be the solution, explained their target market, product, location, and how they would structure their business entity, and why. The winning team created a gaming app allowing gamers to not only play games but also learn to code and create music for the game, all while having fun and learning.

It's important to encourage creativity and explain entrepreneurship to the youth, while letting them know they are supported and that their ideas can be validated. If you know any aspiring entrepreneurs at any age, share with them about the GO Start Up program, a free four-week intro to entrepreneurship hosted by OED. **Apply here** for the next cohort starting in September.

## 40 Years of Chaps Ice Cream



This week's heatwave has us thinking about anything and everything cool, and you can't think cool thoughts in Charlottesville without thinking about Chaps Ice Cream. This year, Chaps is celebrating 40 years of scooping ice cream and creating memories on the Downtown Mall. The same family recipe first used in 1985 is still being used today, ensuring that the ice cream you share with your kids now is going to bring out the same emotions you felt when you had your first taste of Chaps. Join us in congratulating Chaps Ice Cream on their 40th year in business. We look forward to the next 40 years!

## Attention Food Service Businesses

A statewide ban on expanded polystyrene foam products known as Styrofoam is soon to be in effect. This regulation aims to reduce litter and protect Virginia's natural environment. This is a two-phase process. Businesses with 20 or more locations in Virginia must comply by July 1, 2025. Virginia-based businesses with less than 20 locations, which includes many locally owned restaurants, food trucks, and caterers, will have until July 1, 2026, to fully comply.

While there is still time for many small businesses, switching early allows you to test out different alternatives and find what works best for your products, operations, and brand experience. There are many alternatives on the market that are biodegradable, paper, recyclable plastics, and foil or metal options. By starting now, your business can lead the way in reducing environmental harm and creating a stronger connection with eco-conscious customers.

If you need help finding products or understanding the regulations, contact the **Department of Environmental Quality**

## OED Fun Fact

Fireworks were first developed in China in the second century B.C. before making their way to Europe in the 13th century and eventually to the Americas. The current connection to U.S. celebrations of independence on July 4th, could stem from John Adams July 3, 1776 letter to his wife suggesting that celebrations of the U.S.' independence from Britain should include "Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more." OED wishes all a happy and safe Independence day and we hope you are able to enjoy the **Cville Spectacular** fireworks show from Carter Mountain.

## 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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