



## Updates from the Office of Economic Development

### Small Business Saturday



The 15th edition of Small Business Saturday will take place on November 29th, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Started in 2010, Small Business Saturday is designed to shine a spotlight on the small, locally-owned businesses that make each area unique. This year give your Thanksgiving dinner an extra day to digest and avoid fighting the large retailer chaos on Black Friday. Instead, get a group of friends together on Saturday and fuel up over brunch for a full day of small business shopping. Don't forget to make a midday appointment at your favorite salon and spa for a little bit of pampering to keep you going all the way through until dinner at a charming spot that only a few people know about. No matter how you choose to do Small Business Saturday, make it a day to consciously focus on all of the wonderful small businesses that make our area one-of-a-kind!

### Magic on the Mall Returns November 15th!

The popular Cville lights and all your favorite holiday activities are back starting next Saturday, November 15th.

The launch of this year's **Magic on the Mall** is in collaboration with the Vault Virginia open house which invites the public to explore the building's vibrant ecosystem of artists, entrepreneurs, and local partners shaping the creative heart of downtown Charlottesville.

Stop by the Bradbury on the Downtown Mall between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM to pick up your Elves in Cville booklet and write your letter to Santa!

Magic on the Mall continues through December with the Downtown Express train offering free rides on the Downtown Mall every Saturday from 10 - 2 PM; the popular Elves in Cville scavenger hunt will be back on the Mall starting November 15th; Special Santa Mailboxes are on the Downtown Mall outside the Bradbury Cafe from November 15th to December 15th; and Snapshots with Santa will happen on Small Business Saturday at the Paramount Theater on November 29th from 10 - 2 PM.



### Brewing Connections at Coffee & Conversations

Looking to jumpstart your job search, meet local employers, or learn more about community workforce programs? Join us for the next **Coffee & Conversations** event on **Friday, November 21**, from **9:30 to 10:30 a.m.** at the **Albemarle County Department of Social Services**, located at **1600 Fifth Street Extended, Room A**.

Friday Nov. 21st | 9:30-10:30AM

# Coffee & Conversations



## Workforce Mingle

A casual gathering of local jobseekers and employers to share and explore opportunities, skills and networking - all over coffee.



\*RSVP: [bichej@charlottesville.gov](mailto:bichej@charlottesville.gov)



This relaxed, one-hour gathering is designed to bring jobseekers, employers, and workforce partners together in a welcoming, informal setting. Unlike traditional job fairs, Coffee & Conversations creates space for genuine dialogue—over a cup of coffee. Jobseekers can connect directly with hiring managers, learn about available positions, and gain insight into what employers are looking for. Employers, in turn, have the chance to meet motivated candidates face-to-face, share information about their organizations, and build relationships that strengthen the local talent pipeline.

Whether you're exploring your next career move, representing a business that's hiring, or simply curious about available training programs and community resources, this event offers something for everyone. It's an easy, engaging way to expand your network, exchange ideas, and discover new opportunities in our community.

To help us plan for refreshments, please RSVP by **Wednesday, November 19** to [bichej@charlottesville.gov](mailto:bichej@charlottesville.gov).

Come for the coffee—leave with new connections, insights, and possibilities.

## Available Property Spotlight

Located in the heart of Downtown Charlottesville, the property at **534 E. Main Street** offers nearly 10,000 square feet of office space for lease. Divided between two levels, the layout allows you to choose whether you would like office space directly on the Downtown Mall, space off Water Street, or both! A limited amount of parking is available on-site, making this an even more desirable opportunity. If you've been thinking about opening or relocating your business in a place with easy access to diverse dining and shopping experiences, this is the location for you. 534 E. Main Street is represented by the local Thalheimer office. Contact them for additional information or to schedule a showing.



Information on this and other available properties in the City of Charlottesville is available on 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).

## Business Spotlight: Fluffy's Pet Shop at Barracks Road Shopping Center



Tucked inside the Barracks Road Shopping Center, Fluffy's Pet Shop has become a go-to destination for Charlottesville's animal lovers. Owner Martine Funari, originally from the suburbs of Paris, opened the store seven years ago.

When asked why she chose Barracks Road, Martine's answer was simple: "The property is well-maintained, the mix of tenants attracts a wide variety of customers, and it's one of the highest-traffic areas in town."

Martine was inspired to start her business by her late dog, Fluffy, whose name now graces the store. "I wanted to create a space that offers quality products with no unnecessary additives," she shared. That commitment to quality runs deep; if a product changes its ingredients and no longer meets her standards, Martine removes it from her shelves, even if it's a bestseller.

Her goal has always been clear provide healthy, natural treats and food, as well as stylish accessories for local pups and kitties. But beyond the products, Martine has a wealth of knowledge and is passionate about educating pet owners; "If you feed your pets properly, you give them a better life," she says. "Pets give us unconditional love, and they don't have a voice, so it's up to us to make good choices for them."

Since opening, the Charlottesville community has shown unwavering support for the business.

Fluffy's Pet Shop has shown its appreciation by participating in local collaborations, giveaways, and donations, as well as providing treats for other businesses and gift baskets for organizations' silent auctions.

Martine's advice for aspiring entrepreneurs is practical. "Do your homework. You need to understand your market and your customers; that's how you create a better experience. And never compromise on quality customer service."

What motivates her most is the joy she gets from seeing pets enjoy her shop. "It's rewarding to see the furry friends come in and not want to leave. Some even lie down and refuse to go," she laughs.

This holiday season, be sure to stop by Fluffy's Pet Shop at 1107 A Emmet St N, Charlottesville, VA 22903. They have Black Friday deals, including discounts on fashionable pet apparel and their premium Rockster dog food - the same fresh, natural brand served to the Royal Family's pets! So, treat your furry friend to something special this season.

## VEDP's InternshipVA Program - Building Tomorrow's Workforce

Are you ready to strengthen your talent pipeline and grow your organization's future workforce? The **Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)** invites employers across the Commonwealth to take part in an engaging virtual session, *An Employer's Guide to High-Quality Internships*, on **Wednesday, November 19 from 3:30 to 4:30 PM EST**

This interactive discussion, led by Debbie Melvin, Vice President of Talent & Partnerships at VEDP, will explore the key characteristics that make an internship truly high-quality—from structure and mentorship to evaluation and long-term impact. Participants will also gain insights from fellow Virginia employers who are successfully using internships to recruit, develop, and retain top talent.

Attendees will receive a certificate of completion, qualifying them for the **InternshipVA Matching Grant Program**—a valuable opportunity to receive financial support for hosting student interns. The **InternshipVA program** helps Virginia employers offset the costs of internships, encouraging more organizations to offer meaningful, paid opportunities that prepare students for in-demand careers.

To learn more about the **InternshipVA program**, including eligibility criteria and the application process, visit **VEDP's InternshipVA page**.

Register **here** and join the conversation on how high-quality internships can drive both business success and workforce growth.

### Event Details:

- Wednesday, November 19**
- 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM EST**
- Online Event**

## Trades & Tech Scholarship Application Deadline November 15!

The deadline for applying for a **Trades + Tech Education Foundation Adult Opportunity Scholarship** is **Saturday, November 15!**



Fall scholarship awards provide funding for spring classes and programming beginning in January 2026. Awards will be announced in December. Please see the **Scholarships page** to access the application and guidelines.

Adult Opportunity Scholarship awards provide financial assistance for in-person classes and programs that help individuals in the Piedmont region of Virginia access the information and training to become skilled workers. Trades + Tech Education Foundation focuses on programs leading to credentials for well-paying jobs in high-demand areas such as automotive and building trades, healthcare, technology and more. Applications for online classes are currently **not** accepted.

### APPLY FOR AN ADULT OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

*Graduating high school seniors:* the application for Memorial and Next Steps Scholarships for

graduating high school seniors will be open January 15, 2026 – March 15, 2026.

## Celebrate the Season at Charlottesville's Holiday Markets!

The holiday spirit is ramping up at the **Charlottesville City Market**, located at 100 E Water Street. This vibrant market is filled with local farmers, food vendors, and talented craft artisans. Just a few blocks away, **Farmers Market at IX Art Park**, located at 522 2nd Street SE, offers even more unique finds, handmade goods, and delicious local eats. Both markets are open Saturdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, November 22nd through December 20th. There's still plenty of fresh, local produce to enjoy. Grab some winter vegetables, stock up on herbal teas, and find one-of-a-kind gifts for everyone on your list.

For an evening of festive fun, don't miss the **Grand Illumination** on Friday, December 5th from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Ting Pavilion on the historic Downtown Mall. Enjoy a magical night bazaar with local craft and food vendors, face painting, music, and of course, the lighting of the city's beautiful Christmas tree.

Don't let the cooler temperatures keep you away. Bundle up, come out, and support our local vendors while celebrating the warmth and creativity of our community this holiday season!

## We Must-ache if You've Heard the News



Once again, our director, Chris Engel, is growing a mustache throughout the month of November in support of Foothills Child Advocacy Center and Piedmont CASA. Last year, because of the generosity of those who supported his efforts, Chris was able to take home the prestigious Mustache 4 Kids Cville Burt Reynolds trophy (it's a major award!).

Next time you see Chris out and about, feel free to give him a big, "Hey Mustache!" to show your support. If you are interested in learning more about this year's competition you can visit the **Mustache 4 Kids Cville website**.

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## OED Fun Fact

The Charlottesville Downtown Historic District was officially named to the National Register of Historic Places on November 13, 1982. This vibrant area is home to a rich collection of architecturally and historically significant buildings: The Paramount Theater, The Jefferson Theater, Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society, Virginia Discovery Museum and so much more! Our town is steeped in architectural charm and cultural heritage. Next time you are strolling through Downtown, take a moment to look up – you're surrounded by history!

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## Free Business Resources



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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