



Updates from the Office of Economic Development

VA250 Mobile Museum Experience on the DTM April 13th - 15th

A hands-on, interactive, and immersive "museum on wheels," the VA250 Mobile Museum Experience titled "Out of Many, One" is housed in a quad-expandable tractor-trailer that is traveling throughout Virginia and beyond. The mobile museum brings key stories of Virginia's rich history to schools, museums, local events, fairs, and more, highlighting every region of the state.

The mobile museum will be free and accessible to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday, April 13, through Wednesday, April 15.

The VA250 Mobile Museum Experience on the Downtown Mall is made possible by Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, Friends of Charlottesville Downtown, the City of Charlottesville, the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission, Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitors Bureau, and VA250 Charlottesville-Albemarle.

Spring Is Here and So Is the Fun!



Spring is one of the most vibrant times of year in Charlottesville, as warmer weather brings a full calendar of events that support local businesses, attract visitors, and energize the community. From cultural festivals to athletic events and cultural showcases, the season highlights the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit that define the city.

One of the season's signature events is the **Virginia Festival of the Book**, which takes place March 20th through 22nd. This nationally recognized festival brings authors, publishers, and readers together for discussions, readings, and community programs throughout the city, drawing thousands of visitors to Charlottesville each year.

Film and storytelling also take center stage March 20th through 22nd during the **Indie Short Film Festival**, which showcases emerging filmmakers and creative talent. Whether you want to enjoy a film screening, sit in on a table read, engage during a panel discussion, or celebrate during the

awards brunch, there's something going on during the festival that every filmmaker and movie lover will enjoy!

We can't talk about spring events without mentioning the uber-popular **Tom Tom Festival**. Tom Tom returns to the **Downtown Mall** and venues across the city, April 22nd through 26th, with this year's theme – "Courage". Known for blending music, entrepreneurship, technology, and community dialogue, the festival brings together innovators, creatives, and local businesses to celebrate ideas and collaboration. Come out and enjoy a variety of unique and thought-provoking engagement opportunities during the daily sessions and be ready to let your hair down at the annual Tom Tom Block Party.

Spring also draws visitors through popular athletic events such as the **Charlottesville 10 Miler** in March, and the **Charlottesville Marathon** in April, both of which showcase Charlottesville's scenic beauty while bringing participants and spectators into the city's restaurants, shops, and hotels.

Together, these events highlight the dynamic energy of Charlottesville and the important role that culture, entrepreneurship, and community engagement play in supporting the city's economic vitality. Take the

opportunity to join fellow residents and visitors to celebrate the season and experience all that Charlottesville has to offer!

Skills Builder Soft Skills Certification Training - Next Cohort Starts April 3

Enrollment is now open for the next Skills Builder Job Readiness Training course, which begins on April 3, 2026, at the Virginia Career Works Charlottesville Center.

Skills Builder is a free workforce training program designed to help jobseekers strengthen the professional skills needed to successfully enter or re-enter today's workforce. Participants gain practical tools and confidence to pursue employment opportunities and connect with local employers.

During the course, participants can earn a Soft Skills Certification while learning essential workplace skills such as communication, teamwork, professionalism, and problem-solving. The program also provides hands-on support with resume development, interview preparation, and job search strategies to help individuals present themselves effectively to employers.



Questions? ✉ bichej@charlottesville.gov

Skills Builder Course
Job Readiness Training

- Soft Skills Certification
- Resume, Interview Help
- Guaranteed Interview upon completion of course

Register Today!

Class meets: **Apr 3, 10, 17, 24 from 9am - 12pm** @VA Career Works Cville Center. *Must attend all classes to receive guaranteed interview. Get Upskilled & Get Hired!*

Sign Up! It's FREE!  

One of the most valuable features of the program is that graduates receive a guaranteed interview with participating local employers upon successful completion of the course.

The upcoming in-person cohort will meet on Fridays — April 3, 10, 17, and 24 — from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Virginia Career Works Charlottesville Center. Participants must attend all sessions to receive the certification and guaranteed interview.

For individuals who prefer more flexibility, Skills Builder is also available in a self-paced online format, allowing participants to complete the training on their own schedule while still gaining the same valuable job readiness skills.

Skills Builder is part of the City's broader workforce development efforts to help residents build skills, connect with employers, and access better job opportunities in the Charlottesville region.

Those interested in participating can scan the QR code on the flyer or click [here](#) to register. For more information contact Jenny Biche at bichej@charlottesville.gov.

Whether you are entering the workforce for the first time, changing careers, or looking to strengthen your job search skills, Skills Builder can help you get upskilled and get hired.

Forbes Highlights America's Best Startup Employers for 2026

For professionals interested in fast-growing companies and innovative workplaces, the newly released Forbes America's Best Startup Employers 2026 list offers a valuable look at some of the most promising startups in the United States.

Each year, Forbes partners with market research firm Statista to evaluate thousands of emerging companies across the country to identify startups that stand out as exceptional places to work. The 2026 ranking marks the seventh annual edition of the list and highlights companies that are not only growing quickly but also creating strong workplace cultures and opportunities for employees.

To develop the ranking, researchers evaluated approximately 2,700 privately held companies headquartered in the United States, narrowed down from an initial pool of more than 20,000 startups. Eligible companies had to have at least 50 employees, be founded between 2016 and 2023, and operate as independent companies rather than spin-offs of larger corporations.

Each startup was then assessed across three primary factors: company reputation, employee satisfaction, and growth. Data from these categories was combined through a scoring methodology, ultimately producing a final list of the 500 highest-scoring startup employers in the country.

The list highlights organizations that are successfully balancing rapid growth with strong workplace environments. Many of the companies featured are leaders in emerging industries such as artificial intelligence, financial technology, health technology, cybersecurity, and climate innovation—fields that continue to drive new job creation across the U.S. economy.

For jobseekers, the list can serve as a guide to companies that are not only expanding quickly but are also investing in their employees through supportive work environments, career advancement opportunities, and innovative cultures. For communities and workforce development professionals, the rankings provide insight into where new industries and employment opportunities may emerge.

Click [here](#) to see the full list of the 2026 Forbes America's Best Startup Employers.

As startup companies continue to play an important role in shaping the future of the workforce, rankings like these highlight organizations that are setting the standard for growth, innovation, and employee satisfaction.

Tax Season Is Here: A Moment for Preparation, Not Panic



For aspiring entrepreneurs and established business owners alike, tax season can feel daunting and extremely time-consuming. However, it's an essential part of running a business and maintaining its long-term health. Think of it as preparation rather than reaction. Staying organized and proactive with your taxes helps protect your business, avoid penalties, and create a clearer picture of your financial performance.

Your business will need to meet its federal, state, and local tax obligations to remain in good legal standing. Your business structure and location will influence which taxes your business has to pay. Review this [link](#) from the Small Business

Administration to gain a better understanding.

If you feel overwhelmed, remember you don't have to navigate it alone. Consider reaching out to a free advisor at the **Small Business Development Center** to discuss your tax needs. Additionally, the Community Investment Collaborative offers a **Financial Development Program** that provides tools to build responsible personal record-keeping habits and supports entrepreneurs in making better business decisions.

Instead of viewing tax season as a burden, take the step to use the resources available in our business ecosystem. Building your understanding and getting the right support can turn what feels like a stressful obligation into an opportunity to strengthen your business and make more informed financial decisions moving forward.

Available Property Spotlight

Are you ready to move your business out of your home or shared office space into an office of your own? If so, the property at **1233 Cedars Court** could be just the space you're looking for. Unit B of this property is available for lease, offering multiple private offices in 2,400 square-feet of space, along with 6 off-street parking space. Its location within easy walking distance of Barracks Road Shopping Center makes it easy for you to grab a midday meal with clients or do some quick after work shopping. Find out more by contacting the listing agent, Steve Houchens, at shouchens@msc-rents.com or (434) 977-4181 x 115.



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

St. Patrick's Day isn't *quite* what it seems! For starters, St. Patrick himself wasn't Irish at all—he was born in Britain or Scotland. And believe it or not, the holiday's original color wasn't green... it was **blue!** Even more surprising? The **very first St. Patrick's Day parade** didn't march through Dublin—it rolled through **St. Augustine, Florida, in 1601**. Talk about an unexpected twist!

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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