



Updates from the Office of Economic Development

City Seeks Members for Downtown Mall Committee

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the creation of Charlottesville's Downtown Mall, the City is looking ahead to the next 50 years and beyond. The mall has been an economic engine for the City, as well as an essential community gathering place, important historic resource, and vital open space. As with any community amenity, it is necessary to revisit maintenance, improvements, and enhancements. As a public place with a high level of activity throughout the day, we need to ensure everyone is welcome and has a quality experience. The City Manager is forming a Downtown Mall Committee for the purpose of discussing and vetting ideas for the future management and operations of the mall. The intent of this committee is to be a representative public forum for the discussion of the challenges and potential solutions for the Downtown Mall. From this work, the City will develop an action plan to present to City Council. The intention is for this work to be completed within one year, as shown on the attached work plan. If you would be interested in being a member of the Charlottesville Downtown Mall Committee, please complete the online form [here](#)

GO Cook Graduation



Congratulations to the newest graduates of the GO COOK Training Program at Culinary Concepts AB, Christopher Blanchard, and Ishmael Ayers! Their five-week training concluded with a successful Skills Compilation Dinner and Graduation Ceremony on December 7, 2022, at PB&J Fund. Friends, family, and community partners attended and enjoyed the gourmet meal prepared while mingling with the new grads as they shared their experiences and newfound skills. Chris and Ishmael were recognized for their accomplishments and awarded their certifications which they will use in their new positions. Chris, a City of Charlottesville resident, was hired at the Clifton Inn, and Ishmael, who had been working at the Clifton Inn, has now been promoted from breakfast to the main kitchen. We wish both gentlemen the best of luck in their new positions! If you or someone you know is interested in getting

trained and certified, applications are now being accepted for 2023. Click [here](#) to schedule an interview or to learn more. The program is designed to remove barriers to employment and scholarships are available to qualified students.

(Photo by [Kori Price](#))

Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program

The Virginia Values Veterans V3 Program helps employers develop and implement successful, long-term strategies to recruit, hire, and retain Virginia Veterans. The knowledge and abilities today's service members and Veterans gain in our modern military make them an extremely valuable talent pool for companies. The V3 Program provides nationally recognized best practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining a highly skilled, well educated, and easily trainable workforce. Becoming a certified V3 employer is quick and easy, and upon completion employers will be recognized as an official "V3-Certified Employer" and awarded a certificate

from the Governor of Virginia that can be proudly displayed to highlight their commitment to Military Employment. All V3 Member Employers are assigned a V3 Regional Program Manager to assist them through the certification and provide ongoing support to assist employers with reaching their goals. Resources include:

- V3 Grant – receive up to \$10,000 in grants, with \$1,000 being awarded per eligible Veteran hired (employers with fewer than 300 employees)
- Social Media & Marketing
- Hire Vets Now Fellowship Program – establish a SkillBridge program
- On-the-job-Training/Apprenticeships
- Networking and Job Fair Events

And so much more! Becoming a Certified Employer is free. To get started, call (804) 896-1263 or email V3@dvs.virginia.gov or click [here](#)

Minority Business Commission Vacancy

Would you like to make an impact within the Charlottesville Minority Business Community? Consider applying to the Charlottesville Minority Business Commission. Those who are interested must live or work in the City of Charlottesville and/or Albemarle County throughout the appointed terms. Terms are for three-years. The purpose of the Commission is to ensure The City of Charlottesville adheres to equitable procurement policies and continues to promote the start-up of minority-owned businesses. If you are interested in this position apply [here](#) or email mbp@charlottesville.gov

OED Fun Fact

Legend has it that the candy cane dates back to 1670, when the choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral in Germany handed out sugar sticks among his young singers to keep them quiet during the Living Creche ceremony. In honor of the occasion, he bent the candies into shepherds' crooks.



Happy Holidays from the Staff of the Office of Economic Development!

Upcoming Events

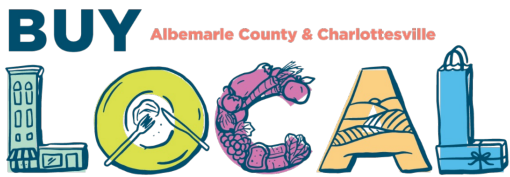
[CIC Entrepreneur Workshop](#)

Take your business to the next level! This hands-on course enables entrepreneurs to determine whether their business is viable, develop an initial plan for launching or growing their business and learn the



fundamentals of how to act on that plan. Applications are now being accepted for the Spring 2023 class. For more information click [here](#).

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](#)!

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

