

## Executive Summary

GO Virginia Region Two, consisting of the Blacksburg, Roanoke-Alleghany, and Lynchburg areas, has more college students per capita than any part of the state. Public and private universities and colleges, community colleges, and secondary schools across the region have long standing efforts to reach employers and connect them with students.

Coming out of the current crisis, Region 2 has a generally healthy economy, especially in high growth sectors like advanced manufacturing, food and beverage manufacturing, information and emerging technology, life sciences and health care. Notwithstanding ongoing efforts to connect such employers and students, talent is also Region 2's major "export," with large numbers of students leaving to seek opportunities elsewhere. Consequently, the region, like many others, struggles to secure talent to fill good jobs.

Recognizing the potential for internships and related activities to close this gap, Region 2's GO Virginia Council funded a number of projects supporting new internships and work-based learning opportunities at all levels of education. These efforts often target specific industries, improving exposure and engagement between students and employers, and ultimately the placement of students with businesses.

This proposal, for a Region 2 Internship Collaborative, will link and leverage these efforts, strengthening the "internship ecosystem" in Region 2, building efficiencies and enhancing impact. Specifically, the collaborative's activities will include:

- conducting and sharing an inventory of programs,
- recruiting new employers to engage with these efforts,
- sharing new tools developed by the Virginia Talent Opportunity Partnership to help employers and students, and
- holding an annual collaborative event to connect employers and students.

These activities will make a measurable difference for both employers and students in the region. Anticipated outcomes will include:

- increasing awareness and access to experiences,
- improving connections and internship placements, and
- the eventual placement or retention of students in full-time jobs.