

## Town of Culpeper receives Community Business Launch Grant

*-Virginia's Department of Housing and Community Development  
awards Town of Culpeper \$45,000-*

**CULPEPER, Virginia** (October 9, 2019) – Governor Northam announces \$180,000 in Virginia Community Business Launch awards. The Town of Culpeper is one of four recipients this year, sharing the spotlight with the Town of Buchanan, Giles County and the Industrial Development Authority of the City of Norton.

The Community Business Launch (CBL) program builds on the tradition of DHCD's business support strategies, placing the community at the heart of entrepreneurial and small business development. "We know community support plays a crucial role in the success of an entrepreneur. It starts with a community's unique vision for its future and then uses the competition to find and foster the entrepreneurs that connect with that vision" **said Jessica Hartness, Business Launch Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.**

The CBL is designed to assist communities in taking a systems approach to defining and pursuing an asset-based small business development strategy. It is designed to excite and educate the community from local residents to local elected officials about the opportunities and impact of entrepreneurial and small business development. This grant will provide the tools to effectively prepare multiple entrepreneurs to operate successful businesses in a designated area.

The Town of Culpeper's designated area focuses on the heart of the historic downtown. Covering .22 square miles, the designated area includes the Culpeper Downtown Urban Development area, which is the Town's sixth designated growth area that encourages adaptive reuse of existing buildings, higher density new construction, and intentional design to complement the Town's historic characteristics. The Culpeper CBL designated area also overlaps additional existing incentive zones, including the Business Incentive Zone, Culpeper Opportunity Zone, and the Culpeper Tourism Zone.

"Downtown Culpeper is a strong destination, for both locals and visitors. We have measured that as many as 47% of all visitors to Town identify downtown dining, shopping and history as the primary purpose of their visit. However, visitors and residents alike report that outdoor recreation, adult beverages, and entertainment are lacking in a town our size. With the Community Business Launch grant we plan to target the missing markets in our downtown and encourage local entrepreneurs to fill the much needed gap" **offers Paige Read, Director of Tourism and Economic Development for the Town of Culpeper.** "We will be opening the *Culpeper Competes* program in the spring of 2020. The program will consist of eight weeks of educational training for participating entrepreneurs, culminating in week nine with a small business pitch competition."

"We've partnered with Germanna Community College, the Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center, People Inc., UVA Community Credit Union, Gayhart & Willis PC, and

local business owners to develop the eight week instructional course, with topics ranging from starting a small business to accounting/finance and credit, operations/legal and leadership, and sales/marketing and branding” **comments Read.** “We are honored to receive this grant, and it’s our intent to launch *Culpeper Competes* as a coordinated, comprehensive sustainable program that identifies, triggers, and supports community-based entrepreneurs and small business at all levels of development.”

*Town of Culpeper Map of Designated Area*

