

VIPC Awards Regional Innovation Ecosystem Grant to Verge to Accelerate the Growing Innovation Economy Throughout Roanoke and The New River Valley

Verge, the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance, is a startup catalyst that expands opportunities for regional technology- and biotechnology-focused entrepreneurs and innovators.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation](#)

(VIPC) today announced that Roanoke and Blacksburg, Virginia-based [Verge](#) has been awarded a Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) grant for \$200,000. Verge is the region's front door for innovators, founders, and funders to work together and to provide a growing roster of companies – both startups and established – with resources to grow and thrive, creating positive economic impact across the region and within the Commonwealth of Virginia.



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Erin Burcham, President of Verge

Verge's programs build, connect, and support the regional tech- and biotech-based entrepreneurial and innovation economic ecosystem. Its flagship program, the Regional Accelerator and Mentoring Program (RAMP), has recently expanded to include “Exit RAMP” to further support startups after their RAMP-in-Residence experience with a heavy focus on access to capital. Exit RAMP support includes ongoing programming, focused mentorship, network-building events, and annual memberships to the

Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) and Virginia Bio. At the other side of the spectrum is “On RAMP,” which includes efforts to increase the pipeline of entrepreneurs and startups in the region and state. On RAMP programming focuses on navigating the local, regional, and statewide ecosystem support network to better prepare startups for acceleration



and reduce their barriers to entry.

Over the past three years, RAMP has nurtured 30 startups, who have launched 35 new products into market and created 97 jobs. RIF funding, in addition to a Verge GO Virginia Strengthening Entrepreneurs' Impact Grant, will help RAMP expand the On RAMP and Exit RAMP initiatives, effectively broadening RAMP's overall potential impact.

"Verge is highly regarded as a key resource for grants, strategy, and thought leadership throughout Virginia," stated Erin Burcham, President of Verge. "We are deeply committed to advancing both regional and statewide priorities through ongoing strategic planning, connecting entrepreneurs with top-tier resources, and establishing robust technology-focused economic partnerships across the region, state, and nation. Building a strong ecosystem requires the involvement of the entire community and a network of stakeholders, and as we engage them to broaden our reach and impact, this additional RIF grant is immensely valuable. We are grateful for VIPC's continued support."

Verge will also use new RIF funding to continue to strengthen its support of, partnerships with, and the overall expansion of other entrepreneurial support organizations located within the region and across the state, including local governments, higher education, and community-based support organizations. As part of its coalition-building and ecosystem-sustaining work, Verge will continue to work with regional stakeholders and statewide partners to develop resources and collaborations that resolve gaps in the entrepreneurial pipeline and ecosystem as identified through Verge's ongoing research.

Joe Benevento, VIPC President and CEO, said, "Verge has been a great collaborative partner with VIPC, regional stakeholders, and local entrepreneurs. We look forward to seeing Verge help foster continued regional innovation growth and a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem supportive of high-impact startup companies that contribute to the Commonwealth's economic prosperity."

"Innovation is happening daily across Virginia, and it's so important to have an organization like Verge as a resource and support for local founders and startups," said Conaway Haskins, VIPC's Vice President of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems. "Verge will continue to facilitate new and existing alliances across the regions to expand their support where it can be most impactful. We've already seen the impact RIF funding has had on Verge's operations in the past, and we're pleased to help them extend their offerings and affect an even greater number of entrepreneurs."

About Verge

Verge, which includes alliance members Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) and the Regional Accelerator and Mentoring Program (RAMP), helps facilitate regional connection, communication, and collaboration by identifying regional priorities and funding to advance tech and biotech projects and solutions across the Roanoke and New River Valleys and Lynchburg. Verge serves GO Virginia Region 2 and works to form collaborations with government, business,

academia, and other organizations to advance the region and grow a thriving innovation economy. Learn more at www.vergeva.org.

About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

Connecting innovators with opportunities. VIPC operates as the nonprofit corporation on behalf of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA). VIPA / VIPC is Virginia's designated authority for leading innovation and economic development in the Commonwealth of Virginia through research, commercialization, and technology advancement; entrepreneurship, startup, and venture capital growth; and regional ecosystem, innovation network, and industry sector expansion. As part of its operations, VIPC helps attract and catalyze private investment into early-stage startup companies, provides research and technology commercialization grants to universities and entrepreneurs, and offers resource and funding support for entrepreneurial ecosystems, innovation networks, and public-private partnerships at local, state, federal levels.

VIPC's programs include: Virginia Invests | Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Development | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA) | The Public Safety Innovation Center (PSIC) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement.

For more information, please visit www.VIPC.org. Explore the latest news from VIPC and images from VIPC-supported stakeholder events. Follow VIPC on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn.

About Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (EE) and the Regional Innovation Fund (RIF)

VIPC's Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (EE) acts as a supporter, connector, and convener for entrepreneurial ecosystems and startup communities throughout Virginia. These stakeholders include accelerators, incubators, innovation hubs, economic developers, technology councils, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and others who assist founders during the early stages of business formation and growth. EE manages the Regional Innovation Fund (RIF), a state-funded program that awards competitive grants to Virginia-based entrepreneurial support organizations (ESOs) that have a strong track record of assisting early-stage Virginia science and technology entrepreneurs and companies. RIF grants provide operational and program funding for successful ESOs and ecosystem-building initiatives. For more information, visit www.VIPC.org.

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