

Southern Maryland Regional Innovation Ecosystem



Southern Maryland 2025 Initiative

Live. Innovate.

Southern Maryland's Response to a Challenge

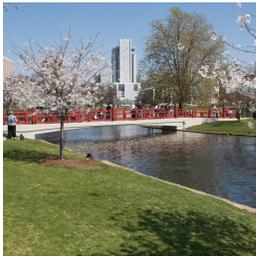
Across the country, regions like Southern Maryland are working together for greater impact. Southern Maryland is in a position of strength right now but leaders in the community recognize that they can not rest on what is the status quo. They recognize that the scale that businesses and individuals look for is a region. Other areas of the country are already competing—and succeeding—as regions and Southern Maryland should advance strategies to secure a bright future for people to Live and Innovate. Some peer examples include:



Columbus 2025

Columbus, Georgia

Columbus 2025 is a multi-year program of work designed to foster a competitive economy, focusing on the region's community, economic, talent and workforce development efforts, split into five action areas. One of the action areas is Vibrant & Connected Places. Stakeholders consistently identified the transformation of Uptown Columbus into a vibrant mixed-use district as the most positive development related to quality of life and place in recent years, and many expressed a desire to see this momentum carried toward even greater improvements. The Vibrant & Connected Places action includes maximizing the impact of the region's natural resources, promoting vibrant and attractive corridors and activity centers, and connecting people and places with expanded opportunities for walking, biking and transit use.



Launch 2035

Huntsville, Alabama

Launch 2035 is a collaborative initiative of private sector volunteer leadership united in the belief that the prosperity of the Madison, Limestone, Morgan counties depends on a regional commitment that fosters economic growth and quality of life. An initiative of the Huntsville Committee of 100, the focus areas of Launch 2035 are workforce development, entrepreneurship, and land use planning. A major project achievement is the Singing River Trail, a 70 mile regional trail system.



Region Reimagined

Manhattan, Kansas

Region Reimagined is a five-year economic development action plan for the Manhattan, Kansas region. The plan was created with the participation of numerous business leaders, community stakeholders, and government officials. The plan coordinates and leverages existing and new efforts to achieve common regional goals across economic diversification, talent, and entrepreneurship.

About the Southern Maryland 2025 Initiative

Through data analysis, plan review, interviews with private firms, and engagement with citizens and government officials, stakeholders in Southern Maryland identified challenges common to Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's counties and outlined a vision and strategies designed to address them. The result is the Southern Maryland 2025 Initiative.

The Southern Maryland 2025 Initiative focuses on these areas: **Live. Innovate.**

The Maryland Department of Commerce, Office of Military and Federal Affairs underwrote this effort as part of Maryland's Defense Industry Adjustment (DIA) grant from the DoD's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). The project builds on the work conducted by the Regional Economic Studies Institute of Towson University, "An Accelerated Regional Diversification Plan for Southern Maryland."

The following pages provide specific recommendations for regional collaboration, economic diversification, an enhanced quality of place, and identify the leaders in Southern Maryland that will propel these recommendations into investable actions.

Live.

The challenge

While the Southern Maryland region has enjoyed a steady growth in population, further analysis demonstrates that the region's population is aging and younger age cohorts are shrinking. Additionally, many who are part of Southern Maryland's large, skilled workforce commute out of the region to work. **The region needs to grow and attract better-paying jobs in advanced industries while also making sure that existing employers can access a strong, diverse labor force.** Promoting quality of life assets can help attract younger workers and the kinds of employers that would keep the workforce from commuting out.

What we heard

Companies struggle to attract and retain younger workers.

Strategies

- Promote Quality of Life Assets in the Region

Goals

- Retain and attract more workers in the 25-44 age cohort to allow the region to match labor force growth to expected employment growth.
- Create a regional focus on quality of life by aligning assets and where possible strengthening their impact potential. The measurable success of this activity will be demonstrated engagement by regional partners in implementation of the initiative being advanced.

Promote Quality of Life Assets in the Region

This group, comprised of the region’s economic development offices, tourism promotion offices and stakeholders, will create a common inventory of quality of life assets and calendar of events by pulling together information from county economic development, tourism, Southern Maryland Heritage, and Visit Maryland and create collateral for businesses and anchor institutions to promote the region that can be incorporated into their material. Shared assets across the Southern Maryland region include heritage sites, agriculture, and waterways. A peer example is:

PA Wilds

Northern Pennsylvania

PA Wilds operates a shared events calendar for a 13 county region in northern Pennsylvania. The calendar features community, festival, heritage, networking, and outdoor events. With its easily accessible materials, PA Wilds invites residents and visitors alike to find activities and attend events in the region.



Innovate.

The challenge

Southern Maryland has a strong base of large employers (500+ employees) that account for 41% of current employment within the region. From 2013-2017 these firms added over 4,000 new jobs. While this is good on the surface the reliance creates an exposure risk due to possible labor force fluctuations at these firms. With more and more of the region's jobs coming from national firms, Southern Maryland's economic future depends on forces outside of the region.¹

Adding to this risk profile are lower rates of business establishment rates and death rates close to the U.S. average. Southern Maryland is averaging 500 establishment births and 506 establishment deaths annually. The region is creating 73 fewer businesses and sees 17 fewer deaths than it would if local rates matched the U.S. rate.²

What we heard

The Southern Maryland region has a robust ecosystem of assets and support for entrepreneurs. However, the active marketing of and connecting entrepreneurs to those resources remains a critical, unmet need. The College of Southern Maryland, through its Entrepreneurship and Innovation Institute, is well positioned to support entrepreneurship ecosystem and diversification efforts within High-Tech Innovation-Dependent Enterprises (IDEs), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or "Main Street" Enterprises, and Agriculture/Aquaculture-Related Enterprises.

Strategies

- Create a More Coordinated and Robust Startup Support System
- Develop Programming and Funding to Support Diversification Through Small Business Growth

Goals

- The Southern Maryland Region must increase the number of business births by 75 per year and continue to see lower business death rates.

¹ Quarterly Workforce Indicators

² 1989-2015 Business Information Tracking Series

Create a More Coordinated and Robust Startup Support System

Southern Maryland has an opportunity to grow its entrepreneurial ecosystem, with a focus on High-Tech, Innovation-Dependent Enterprises (IDEs). Ensure that resources are fully documented and accessible through the Innovate Southern Maryland portal. The Southern Maryland portal connects entrepreneurs to resources and services available to them. The Innovate Southern Maryland website and this effort should merge to provide a communications platform for Live and Innovate. A peer example is:

KC Source Link

Kansas City area

KC Source Link is an online resource that is a guide to entrepreneurship in the Kansas City area. The portal provides resources to start a business, find funding, and get help. The resource navigator allows users to search for resources based on area of assistance, need, industry, or business stage.



Develop Programming and Funding to Support Diversification Through Small Business Growth

This strategy focuses on growing existing businesses, specifically Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or “Main Street” Enterprises, and Agriculture/Aquaculture-Related Enterprises, in order to help diversify the Southern Maryland economy. Though the tactics are similar to supporting IDEs, the needs of these businesses, and resources available to support them, are often different. Ecosystem stakeholders will be convened to further map the resources that support existing businesses, identify challenges and opportunities to grow those businesses, and identify how to develop and promote programming to support them. Programming could include individualized and cohort business growth training, and matchmaking between businesses and resources. The Initiative will also seek outside investment to support this programming. A peer example is:

10,000 Small Businesses Program

Babson College with Goldman Sachs

Launched in 2009, the *10,000 Small Businesses* program has graduated 7,000 growth-minded small businesses nationwide. The program partners with 14 community colleges, including at Babson College. 300 small businesses go through the program each year. The program helps small businesses access education, capital, and support services that address barriers to growth.

10,000 Small Businesses offers qualified business owners:

- Guidance in creating a customized growth plan that includes opportunity identification and feasibility analysis, financial management, leadership, negotiations, and marketing.
- One-on-one business counseling and a network of peer support from other small business owners, as well as leaders in the business world.



Timeline & Milestones

Strategy	2019	2020	2021	2022
Promote Quality of Life Assets in the Region	Create a common inventory of quality of life assets and calendar of events	Create collateral for businesses and anchor institutions to promote the region		
Create a More Coordinated and Robust Startup Support System	Ensure that resources are fully documented and accessible through the Southern Maryland Innovates portal	Convene entrepreneurial ecosystem stakeholders to assist in mapping the region's ecosystem	Begin to build momentum utilizing the Strategic Doing collaborative network facilitation framework	
Develop Programming and Funding to Support Diversification Through Small Business Growth	Convene ecosystem stakeholders, promote existing programming	Seek investment from out of region resources to support new programming	Review and update programming as needed	

Get Involved

There are opportunities for individuals, organizations, and private firms to get involved in the Southern Maryland 2025 Initiative. The two main ways to get involved are:

- Participate on a strategic action working group
- Invest in Southern Maryland's economic growth

Participate on a strategic action

Each strategy has a corresponding working group. Working groups meet regularly and are led by working group chairs.

Invest in Southern Maryland's economic growth

Funding for the effort comes from a variety of sources. Each county and the College of Southern Maryland contributes to the identification and pursuit of funding for the initiative. Grants for specific projects come from foundations and the state of Maryland. Private funds round out the effort.