

2026

Virginia Growth and Opportunity Fund
(GO Virginia)



Annual
Meeting

GO Virginia State Board Annual Meeting
Positioning Virginia and Virginia's Regions for Economic Growth
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
10:30 AM – 3:00 PM

LOCATION:

Brightpoint Community College
13101 Route 1, Chester, Virginia
Nicholas Center Ballroom, N102B

10:30–11:00 AM | Annual Meeting - Arrival, Registration

Informal networking among Board members, staff, regional council leadership, and invited guests.

11:00-11:30 AM | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Emily O'Quinn, Chair

The Honorable Carrie Chenery, Secretary of Commerce and Trade

Bill Fiege, President, Brightpoint Community College

(11:30-11:45 | Buffet Lunch and Return to Seats)

11:30–12:30 PM | Lunch – Keynote

Joseph Parilla, Senior Fellow and Director of Applied Research | Brookings Metro

Brookings Institution: States enable; regions thrive. A state playbook for growing good jobs in the next economy

12:30-12:45 PM | Break

12:45-1:30 PM | 10 Years in the Making - A Retrospective on GO Virginia and Its Impact

Heywood Fralin, GO Virginia Foundation

- Program History/Origin Story

Sara Dunnigan, Deputy Director

- Review of program milestones and achievements

Breakout Discussions – GO Virginia Program Impact

1:30-2:00 | Future Economic Opportunities – Virginia's Economy and Opportunity

Jason El Koubi, President and CEO, VEDP

2:00-2:45 | How can we position our regions/state to achieve those goals?



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Breakout Discussions – GO Virginia Program Future

2:45-3:00 PM | Closing Remarks and Next Steps

- Summary of day
- Timeline for integrating insights into future program strategy discussions
- Appreciation and adjournment



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GO Virginia Annual Meeting Speaker & Panelist Biographies

Welcome and Opening Remarks

EMILY O'QUINN | Senior Vice President of Investor Relations and Corporate Communications, Alpha Metallurgical Resources

Emily O'Quinn is Senior Vice President of Investor Relations and Corporate Communications for Alpha Metallurgical Resources (NYSE: AMR), the largest U.S. producer of metallurgical coal for the steel industry. In her role, Emily leads the company's public affairs efforts with responsibility for investor relations, government relations, communications, and corporate affairs. With experience in both private and public companies, Emily has communications experience in a variety of business transactions including mergers, divestitures, an initial public offering, a Chapter 11 bankruptcy restructuring, and the launch of a new company. Over the course of her career, Emily also has been responsible for crisis management, strategic messaging and advocacy campaigns, corporate philanthropy, media relations, annual reporting, and management of political action committees. In addition to her corporate background, Emily is engaged in the community and volunteers her time with organizations to help expand educational opportunities for children and increase access to the arts. She is currently President of the Board of Trustees for Barter Theatre, the State Theatre of Virginia. Emily has served on a number of regional and local non-profit boards of directors, and she is a past gubernatorial appointee to both the Library of Virginia Board and the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees. She currently serves in a gubernatorial appointment to the Growth and Opportunity (GO Virginia) state board, which focuses on the Commonwealth's economic development priorities to ensure a strong Virginia. Emily holds a Bachelor's degree in English from King College in Tennessee. She is also a graduate of the Women in Governance Executive Education program through UCLA's Anderson School of Management.

CARRIE H. CHENERY | Secretary of Commerce and Trade

Carrie H. Chenery is a native Virginian with two decades of experience in economic development, public policy, government relations, and strategic communications through both public service and private business. Her career spans identifying business growth opportunities for clients, leading a regional economic development organization, managing economic development policy for Virginia's largest private industries, and shepherding legislative and budgetary priorities through the Virginia General Assembly. Prior to her appointment as Secretary of Commerce & Trade, Chenery founded and led Valley Pike Partners, helping companies grow across Virginia with modern strategies in public affairs, business development, and community engagement. Carrie previously served as the Executive



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Director of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP), the region's economic development and marketing organization. During her tenure, the region announced new and existing business projects representing over \$460 million in capital investment and 1,900 new jobs while unifying seven counties and five cities under a shared economic development vision, building coalitions among 160 private sector investors, and serving as the region's strategic voice to site consultants, partner agencies, and elected and appointed officials. Prior to her leadership role at SVP, Carrie served the Virginia Office of the Governor as the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry. She was responsible for the oversight and advancement of economic development efforts, including administration of the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) fund, related to Virginia's largest private industries of agriculture and forestry. During her tenure, the AFID fund contributed to the announcement of over \$46 million in new private capital investment and the creation of over 400 jobs. Prior to her role in the Governor's Office, she gained wide-ranging economic development, marketing, government relations, and communication experience across diverse industry sectors as the Manager of Legislation & Policy at the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and as a Director of Government Affairs with the law firm Williams Mullen. A graduate of Virginia Tech, Carrie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Policy & Planning and Agricultural & Applied Economics. She is also a graduate of the Political Leaders Program through the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia. She previously served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority Board of Directors and the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. Carrie has been named one of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers by Consultant Connect and as an Outstanding Alumni by the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. She and her husband, Taylor, are the proud parents of two daughters.

DR. BILL FIEGE | President, Brightpoint Community College

Dr. Bill Fiege became Brightpoint Community College's eighth president in January 2024. For nearly 12 years prior, Dr. Fiege oversaw operations for academic and student affairs as vice president of learning and student success at the college. Before joining Brightpoint, Dr. Fiege held positions at Germanna Community College and Longwood University, serving in a variety of roles including division dean, speech communication faculty member, assistant director of alumni relations, and assistant director of athletics. He completed his bachelor's degree in political science at Longwood University; master's degree in speech communication from Bloomsburg University; and Ph.D. in community college leadership through Old Dominion University. Dr. Fiege is currently a member of Virginia's Gateway Region Board of Directors, YMCA of Greater Richmond Board of Directors, and MEGA Mentors Board of Directors. He also coaches the Ironbridge National travel softball team. He and his wife, Renee have two daughters. They live in Midlothian, Virginia.



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Keynote

JOSEPH PARILLA | Senior Fellow and Director of Applied Research, Brookings Metro

Joe Parilla is a senior fellow and Director of Applied Research at Brookings Metro, where he is recognized as a leading expert in inclusive economic growth. Since joining Brookings in 2012, he has played a key role in shaping research and policy initiatives that support equitable economic development in cities and regions across the United States. His work has influenced both local and national place-based economic policies, as well as multi-sector investment strategies that promote shared prosperity in several cities and regions. Parilla's research has been widely cited and has helped redefine best practices in economic development, talent development, innovation, and regional competitiveness. As Director of Applied Research, Parilla has designed and led major projects that connect research with real-world impact. Most recently, he has led the research portfolio for the Regional Inclusive Growth Network, a coalition of civic leadership organizations focused on advancing racially inclusive economic growth. Since 2022, he has spearheaded applied research projects examining the implementation of place-based industrial programs funded through the American Rescue Plan Act and the CHIPS and Science Act. To translate these insights into action, he supports a network of innovation and economic development leaders in seven U.S. regions as they leverage significant public investments in strategic sectors to expand economic opportunities for residents and communities. He is also deeply engaged in bridging local action with state and federal economic policy, and regularly advises policymakers in states across the nation, key federal agencies, and the White House. He holds a B.A. in economics and geography from Macalester College and an M.P.P. from Georgetown University. He lives in Washington, D.C., with his family.

10 Years in the Making - A Retrospective on GO Virginia and Its Impact

HEYWOOD FRALIN | Chairman, Retirement Unlimited, Inc

W. Heywood Fralin, a lifelong resident of the Roanoke Valley, is a past member of the University of Virginia Board of Visitors, serving two years as Rector. He is a past Chair of the Virginia Business Council, and a current member of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council, having served as Chair for over 15 years. He has served on the Board of Visitors of Virginia Tech and is the past Chair of the State Council of Higher Education. Currently, Mr. Fralin serves as Board of Visitors representative for the Virginia Athletics Foundation, as Vice Chair on the Board of the Taubman Museum of Art and serves on the Virginia Western Community College Foundation Board of Directors. Additionally, Mr. Fralin serves on the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board and on the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Foundation Board. He is Chairman of Retirement Unlimited, Inc.



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SARA DUNNIGAN | Deputy Director, DHCD

Sara Dunnigan is the Deputy Director of the Economic Development and Community Vitality (EDCV) division within the Virginia Department for Housing and Community Development. She serves as lead staff for GO Virginia, an economic development initiative driving the growth and diversification of regional economies across the Commonwealth. GO Virginia has supported 263 projects and made more than \$110.0 million in investments designed to support growth within targeted industry clusters and create new, higher paying jobs. Other units within the division include Virginia Main Street, Microfinance, and Real Estate Revitalization, which includes Virginia's Enterprise Zone Program. Sara has more than 25 years of experience in business recruitment, business retention and expansion, workforce development, and strategic place marketing. She earned a degree in Economics from Wright State University. Sara served in former Governor Ralph Northam's workforce secretariat and as former Governor Terry McAuliffe's Chief Workforce Policy Advisor and Executive Director of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. Prior to joining state government, Sara worked at the Greater Richmond Partnership.

Future Economic Opportunities – Virginia's Economy and Opportunity

JASON EL KOUBI | President and CEO, VEDP

Jason El Koubi oversees Virginia's strategic vision for economic development across the Commonwealth: creating opportunities for communities and companies alike to achieve long-term growth. Jason serves as a senior advisor to companies making complex location and investment decisions. He works directly with corporate leaders and site selectors to navigate business growth opportunities and challenges, align stakeholders and prospective partners, and move projects forward with speed and certainty. Since becoming President and CEO, he has overseen more than 300 projects resulting in over 45,000 jobs and more than \$90 billion in capital investment, including major investments from AstraZeneca, Avio, AWS, Eli Lilly, LEGO, LS Cable & System Ltd, Merck, Micron, and Wells Fargo, among others. Jason brings a proven track record as an economic development dealmaker, shaped by leadership roles at both the state and regional levels, including serving as Assistant Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development and President and CEO of One Acadiana – a regional economic development organization. His experiences span policy, strategy, and execution, enabling him to align government partners, businesses, and other stakeholders to deliver complex projects seamlessly. He combines those skills with a global perspective and credibility with international firms, as well as deep expertise in trade and logistics through his service on the Port of Virginia board. With board leadership spanning early childhood to higher education, Jason brings a long-term view and has placed talent development at the heart of Virginia's economic development strategy, ensuring Virginia aligns education with economic opportunity while effectively navigating complex demographic and technological trends. With a background in engineering, he has an analytical approach that allows him to engage in the technical and operational aspects of business expansion and help companies move from strategy to successful execution.



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