

SourceLink Virginia

Linking Entrepreneurs to Resources to Help Them Grow

2015 Virginia Agritourism Conference
March 11, 2015
Staunton, VA



The Virginia Community Economic Network is an independent, **statewide convener, thought leader, and public voice** for individuals and organizations that are committed to the creation and expansion of community economic opportunities throughout Virginia.

Founded in 2013, VCEN serves as an intermediary promoting innovative and sustainable approaches to state and local entrepreneurship & economic development that spur job creation, increase wealth-building, and enhance community vitality.

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Where can aspiring & existing Virginia entrepreneurs go when they need help?



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Why SourceLink?

Over the past 5+ years, numerous local, regional and state economic development agencies have explored creating online small business resource websites to enhance entrepreneurial development. The Commonwealth's "Virginia Business One-Stop" has built-in limitations.

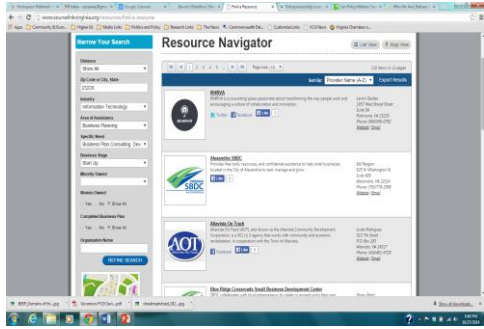
After months of review, the US SourceLink platform emerged as the best, and most cost-effective, way for VCEN to address this need. It was started by the Kauffman Foundation & University of Missouri-KC in 2003 – US SourceLink and its regional & state affiliates have earned several awards from IEDC and funding from USDA, EDA, etc.

VCEN engaged a wide array of economic developers, business assistance groups, and entrepreneurs from across VA to develop, enhance and promote SourceLink Virginia. It initially launched in August 2014 with 30 providers and has grown to over 200 programs and resources listed.

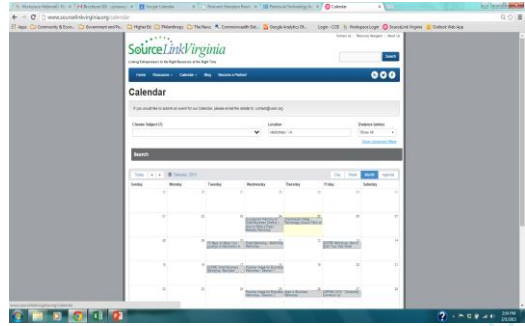
Key Features



Resource Navigator connects entrepreneurs to providers



Statewide calendar of events searchable by topic, location & distance



The User Experience

Service Providers

- The initial core of service providers included any nonprofit, university or governmental organization providing business assistance, but now private sector (for-profit) service providers are now being screened and listed.
- Low-impact online or paper intake process with continuous feedback for rapid improvements
- Easily integration into existing local & regional initiatives via website script
- Free publicity for services & events and data generated to support policy advocacy & ecosystem mapping
- Discovery of new partners and collaborations
- **Free of charge**

Entrepreneurs

- Access to information on providers sorted by geography including outside of immediate vicinity
- Clean online interface free of banner ads, pop-ups, etc.
- No collection of personally-identifiable or proprietary business information
- No unsolicited communication from VCEN or SourceLink Virginia
- Data analytics plus direct feedback can lead to business assistance program creation and reform
- **Free of charge**

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Getting the help you need

Of the 200+ providers currently listed:

- 172 serve the Tourism sector
- 168 serve the Agriculture & Forestry sector
- 86 can provide you with assistance on your business plan
- 82 can provide you with marketing & sales assistance
- 53 offer budget, financial, and cash flow training
- 47 can advise you on obtaining debt funding
- 26 can advise you on obtaining equity funding
- 25 provide debt or equity financing
- 7 offer technology grants

We are constantly adding more resources as find them!

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Contact information

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