



**ALBEMARLE COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Growing  
Ideas  
Opportunities**



# SMALL BUSINESS TOOLKIT



**An informative resource for...**

-  **Starting a business**
-  **Existing businesses**
-  **Relocating a business**
-  **Expanding a business**

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## WELCOME

Welcome to Albemarle County, a dynamic and progressive community that values its past and looks to a strong and vibrant future. Albemarle's assets, including excellent educational resources, a skilled and qualified workforce, competitive tax rates, and an outstanding quality of life, combine to make our county a great place to live, work and run your business. We are very focused on promoting our community's overall economic vitality, and are anxious to support existing businesses looking to expand or relocate, and to welcome new enterprises that are starting up or entrepreneurs who are considering relocating to our county.

Albemarle County economic development staff recognizes the complexity of starting, growing or relocating your business and we are here to offer assistance to help you navigate the necessary processes. This Small Business Toolkit is intended to provide an informative starting point for anyone who is interested in:

- starting a new business
- changing locations within Albemarle County for an existing business
- expanding a business at their current location
- relocating their business into Albemarle County

We strongly encourage anyone considering any of the above options to review this toolkit and to talk to County staff regarding permitting processes, regulations, business licenses and other requirements prior to making any contractual commitments.

Staff contact information is noted throughout the toolkit, and our economic development staff is always available at any point in the process to answer questions and provide assistance. We want to work with you from the earliest stages of your project to make sure that your process is as efficient and hassle-free as possible.

Thank you for considering Albemarle County as a home for your business.

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## GETTING STARTED

If you are considering starting, expanding or relocating a business in Albemarle County, this toolkit will describe the local regulatory requirements, including business licensing and taxes, and zoning - information for the permitting process and regulations is divided based on the following business types:

- Commercial or industrial
- Home-based
- Agri-business

While this toolkit provides a broad overview, we strongly recommend that you contact staff as a first step in your process to discuss the details of your particular situation.



## BUSINESS LICENSING, COUNTY & STATE TAXES – Business License Office, 434-296-5855

### Business Licensing, Taxes

Every business operation in Albemarle County must apply for a local Albemarle County business license. The Business License application collects information about the type of business, which provides a basis for assessing local business taxes. For example, a professional offices operation is assessed under a “Business, Professional and Occupational License” tax or BPOL. The BPOL taxation rate and basis for taxation will vary by type of enterprise (e.g. contractors versus a medical office). The State has two levels for BPOL assessment, for Albemarle-based operations, any business earning less than \$100,000 gross per year pays a flat BPOL fee of \$50. For those enterprises with gross earnings of exactly \$100,000 or more, the BPOL taxes are assessed by four major types of enterprise – 1) retail, 2) contracting, 3) financial, real estate & professional services, and 4) repair, personal & business services. A staff person with the [Office of Finance](#) will help guide the applicant to identify the most appropriate category of operation, their main phone number is 434-296-5855.

Machinery, Tools and Equipment Tax - A manufacturing operation is taxed on at a rate of \$4.28/\$100 of equipment value, pro-rated over a 6-year depreciation schedule.

Sales Tax - A retail-enterprise must also collect and remit monthly retail sales tax to the State, with 1% returned back to the Albemarle County government. Sales taxes must be collected and paid on a monthly basis. County staff can assist in registering for the State’s on-line sales tax system; the following link will help a business owner self-register: <https://www.business.tax.virginia.gov/VTOL/Login.seam>. Office of Finance staff can be reached at 434-296-5896, or refer to the County’s website to find the [Finance Department’s home page](#).

There are other more specialized taxes and licenses, for more information please contact the County’s Finance Office, Kenny Hoy, at 434-296-5852.

“Business Personal property” is also taxed at the County level, every taxpayer owning or renting tangible personal property or machinery and tools used in a business must pay Business Personal Property tax. The business owner is required to complete a Business Personal Property Statement to identify the cost of the tangible personal property, machinery, and tools, and expensed items costing \$250 or more in possession January 1. The Business Personal Property tax is for any property costing over \$250 and in a business-owner’s possession by January 1 of a given tax year, however, the tax basis varies by age of ownership:

1st Year	25.0 %
2nd Year	22.5 %
3rd Year	20.0 %
4th Year	17.5 %
5th Year	15.0 %
6th Year	12.5 %
7th Year and Older	10.0 %



## ZONING REGULATIONS AFFECTING A BUSINESS IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY

First determine what zoning you need or how your property is already zoned.

The “where” you operate a business is managed through the County’s land use regulations called zoning, for the purpose of mitigating impacts of a business operation.

- Use the County’s GIS Web tool to determine your zoning: <http://gisweb.albemarle.org>
- Call the [Community Development](#) office, 434-296-5832.
- Whether you use the online tool or call, you will need to know either the address of the property or the 14 digit Parcel ID (ex. TMP 03200-00-00-03200).
- Once you know the zoning of the property, check the County’s website for a land use chart, under Community Development highlights, or contact Community Development about your parcel’s zoning.

Prior to purchasing or leasing a property, please contact our Zoning Department (call 434-296-5832) and ask for a member of the zoning staff, or email [fmacall@albemarle.org](mailto:fmacall@albemarle.org) so that our staff can work with you to ensure your business meets zoning, architectural review and sign ordinances.

## COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL ZONED BUSINESSES

I would like for my business to operate from a Commercial/Industrial Zoned property and I believe I have found an existing commercial or industrial space to operate from.

- You will need to obtain a [Zoning Clearance](#) and may need to obtain the appropriate building permits, as needed, for any renovations of the space.
- [Certified engineers report \(CER\)](#) is needed for any industrial zoning clearance.
- Please check with the Building Official, 434-296-5832 for questions regarding building renovations. If renovations or upgrades to the building(s) are needed, then the appropriate permits will be needed and inspection of the site will be made for compliance with the Building Regulations in the [Albemarle County Code](#) and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code and with applicable Zoning Ordinance regulations.

**Albemarle County has staff on-hand to address business-related questions you may have:**

Francis MacCall	General planning questions	<a href="mailto:fmacall@albemarle.org">fmacall@albemarle.org</a>
Jay Schlothauer	Building inspections	<a href="mailto:jschloth@albemarle.org">jschloth@albemarle.org</a>
Ron Higgins	Zoning questions	<a href="mailto:rhiggins@albemarle.org">rhiggins@albemarle.org</a>
Rebecca Ragsdale	Zoning questions	<a href="mailto:rragsdale@albemarle.org">rragsdale@albemarle.org</a>
Stewart Wright	Signage questions	<a href="mailto:swright2@albemarle.org">swright2@albemarle.org</a>
Kenneth Hoy	Business License & taxation questions	<a href="mailto:khoy@albemarle.org">khoy@albemarle.org</a>
Bob Willingham	Real estate assessment questions	<a href="mailto:bwillingham@albemarle.org">bwillingham@albemarle.org</a>
Glenn Brooks	Site plan engineering questions	<a href="mailto:gbrooks@albemarle.org">gbrooks@albemarle.org</a>
Susan Stimart	Economic development incentives	<a href="mailto:sstimart@albemarle.org">sstimart@albemarle.org</a>



## COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL ZONED BUSINESSES

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### I would like for my business to operate from a Commercial/Industrial Zoned property and I will want to build a new building for my business.

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1. *Pre-Application Meeting – Every Monday (except holidays) at 2pm, 3pm and 4pm. Call 434-296-5832 to set up an available meeting.*
  - The first thing you need to do is contact the Department of Community Development and set up a pre-application meeting to discuss your proposal. There is no charge and Staff who come to these meetings will typically include one or more of the following staff; Planner, Engineer, Zoning Official, and [Architectural Review Board \(ARB\)](#) from the Department of Community Development, and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). You may need to contact other agencies that would be identified in the pre-application meeting.
2. *Site Plan Review*
  - Once your zoning has been verified to permit your use, your next step would be to have a site plan drawn up by a licensed engineer, architect or landscape architect and submit a [Preliminary Site Development Plan Application and Checklist](#) to the Department of Community Development by a date identified in the Application Review Schedule. The review of a new site plan will go through a 60-day preliminary review process. If the preliminary site plan is approved you will then have one year to submit a [Final Site Development Plan Application and Checklist](#) for review by County staff. If the property falls within an Entrance Corridor Overlay District, separate submittal of an [ARB application](#) will likely be required. ARB approval is required prior to final Site Development Plan approval. The pre-application meeting mentioned above will provide additional details.
3. *Construction & Inspection*
  - If the site plan is approved then the next step is to apply for a building permit. You will need the following to obtain a building permit: 1) Building Permit Application, 2) Two approved copies of the site plan, and 3) building plans. During review, the site will be inspected to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations in the Albemarle County Code and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, and with Zoning Ordinance regulations. The County Zoning staff provides a Zoning Inspections Packet that explains the preliminary and final zoning inspections process for all site plans. If you plan to install any signs for your business that require a permit and are subject to zoning regulations, please visit the signs center at the County's website, [www.ablemarle.org/signs](http://www.ablemarle.org/signs).

Prior to opening your business you will need to obtain a Zoning Clearance for your specific business activity. If there will be other businesses proposed to occupy the new building then those businesses will also need to obtain a Zoning Clearance.

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### I would like to expand at my current location.

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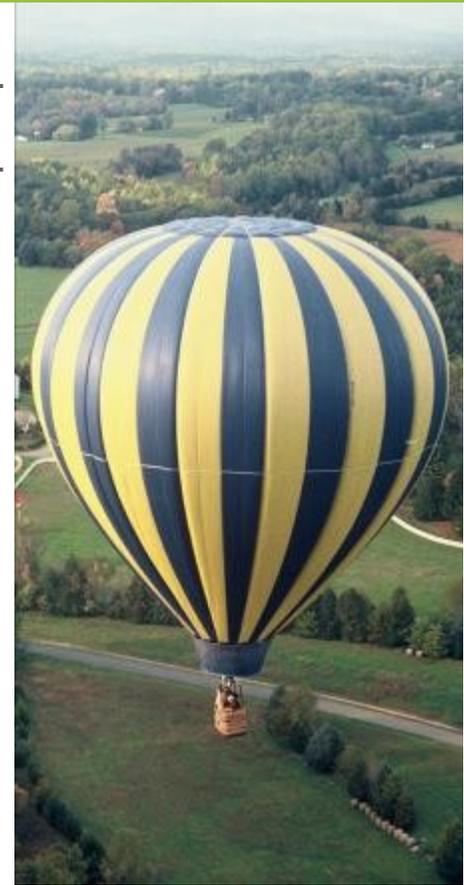
If your operations are expanding, please contact the Economic Development Facilitator, 434-296-5841, about expansion options, possibilities for expanding the existing location and whether your operation would qualify for grant resources. The business owner would follow the same steps described previously if you would like to expand your business at its current location, including verifying zoning requirements, pre-application meeting, and determining if any site plan requirements or permits are needed.

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### I would like to relocate my business.

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If your business planning is taking the operations to a new location within the County, refer to the information above about the process for getting your business approved by the Albemarle County Department of Community Development. You will need to follow the same steps outlined above for expanding your business – including verifying zoning requirements, a pre-application meeting, and determining if any site plan requirements or permits are needed.



## BUSINESS SIGNS

Signs in Albemarle County are regulated by ordinance. See the County's Community Development web page, for signs and forms. [www.albemarle.org/signs](http://www.albemarle.org/signs)

The ordinance specifies sign size, location/placement, and certain design characteristics (e.g., illumination).

Signs that fall within the County's Entrance Corridor Overlay District must also comply with the Entrance Corridor Sign Guidelines. These guidelines are administered by staff and the Architectural Review Board.

Most applications for signs can be reviewed by staff if the applications are complete and if they meet the applicable guidelines and criteria.

During the review of a complete application, staff will contact the applicant if clarification, additional information, or revisions to submit-tal materials are required.

Information on sign permits and the sign review process is available at the County's Community Development page or you may contact Community Development at 434-296-5832 with questions.

## HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

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### I would like for my small business to operate from my home.

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#### A. My property is zoned Rural Area (RA)

There are two types of Home Occupations that may be permitted within the Rural Area. Each type requires an application.

- a. [Minor Home Occupation Clearance](#): Within the home, no employees, no customers, no use of an accessory structure.
- b. [Major Home Occupation Clearance](#): Within the home and/or an accessory structure, no more than two employees onsite, customers may come to site as outlined in regulations.

OR

#### B. My property is zoned something other than Rural Area (RA)

There are two types of Home Occupations that may be permitted within all zoning districts other than RA. The Class A Home Occupation Clearance has 1-page application. The Class B Home Occupation Clearance requires a [Special Use Permit Application](#) that will require a pre-application meeting.

- a. Class A Home Occupation Clearance: Within home, no employees, customer visits limited to 7 per week, no use of an accessory structure.
- b. Class B Home Occupation requires a Special Use Permit. It is important you contact staff to discuss the requirements of this of application. It is granted by Board of Supervisors (BOS), within home and or an accessory structure, no more than 2 employees onsite, must meet conditions set by BOS and obtain a Zoning Clearance.

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### Currently my business is operated from my home and I have a Home Occupation Clearance from the County. Can I expand at my home or will I need to find commercial or industrial zoned property?

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1. What kind of Home Occupation has been approved? Community Development staff will need to know what type: Minor, Major, Class A, or Class B.

All Home Occupation businesses are limited to using 25% of the gross floor area of the dwelling (not to exceed 1,500 square feet), unless modified by the Board of Supervisors. This limitation also applies to "Major" and "Class B" permitted operations that use accessory structures. Most homes do not need to use that amount of square footage, but a waiver granted by the Board of Supervisors enables a Home Occupation to use up to 49% of the gross floor area of the dwelling, if needed.

2. If the amount of area you wish to use exceeds the limitations set, the number of employees can possibly expand, or customer traffic exceeds the limitations set then you will need to start looking for a new commercial or industrial location.



## AGRIBUSINESS

Agricultural uses on parcels of five (5) acres or more are eligible for a decreased property tax called “land use.” To learn more about qualifying for land use, please contact the County Real Estate Department, 434-296-5856.

Please see the [County Zoning Ordinance](#) to learn more about what kinds of agri-tourism activity in the rural areas are considered by-right and what would require a special use permit. Many by-right activities require only a Zoning Clearance or a Home Occupation Clearance. It is recommended to contact a staff person with the Albemarle County Department of Community Development, 434-296-5832, for any questions about permitted agri-business uses and other regulations such as permanent or temporary signage in the County’s designated rural areas.

The Zoning Ordinance has specific provisions for the following common uses in the rural areas.

- Farm Stand – allowed by-right in most circumstances. Community Development staff require a Zoning Clearance to assure that the location meets basic safety standards.
- Farm Sales – allowed by-right in the Rural Areas zoning district with a Zoning Clearance. A new building is limited to 4,000 square feet.
- Farmers’ Market – allowed by-right with a Zoning Clearance in commercially-zoned districts, but this needs a Special Use Permit in the rural areas.
- Farm Wineries – Farm wineries are allowed a multitude of functions and activities, however it’s recommended to check the Zoning Ordinance and Community Development staff when considering an ancillary or new use at a farm winery.
- Food Processing – Every entrepreneur considering crops, livestock or value-added food production should contact the Health Department and/or the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. Staff at Community Development can help connect you to local representatives from the two state agencies.
- Farm & Vineyard Tours – This new, emerging business trend for entrepreneurs supports and complements the County’s rural economy, and has few regulatory barriers. When considering this business venture, please contact the Virginia Dept. of Alcohol Beverage Control for specific guidance. Typically no tour operator may collect wine tasting fees on behalf of a vineyard.
- Special Events & Festivals – The lovely rural views and quiet settings may seem ideal for special events and festivals. For any business planning, please contact the County’s Dept of Community Development to learn what permits are needed and by when in planning for your event.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Exterior architectural design is subject to the County’s Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines when a property falls within an Entrance Corridor Overlay District. This process is administered by staff and the Albemarle County Architectural Review Board (ARB).

Some applications, called county-wide Certificates of Appropriateness, can be reviewed by staff if the applications are complete and if they meet the applicable guidelines and criteria. Other applications, projects that are typically larger and/or more complicated, require review by the ARB at one or more ARB meetings. Incomplete applications cannot be reviewed and significantly slow down the approval process. During the review of both types of applications, staff will contact the applicant if clarification, additional information, or revisions to the submittal materials are required.

A summary of the ARB process is provided at [www.albemarle.org/arb](http://www.albemarle.org/arb).



## OTHER RESOURCES

### Alcoholic Beverage License

The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control exercises a monopoly over the importation and sale of alcoholic beverages other than beer and wine. Licenses are issued for the manufacture of liquors, the wholesaling and sale of beer and wine, and the sale at retail of spirits by the drink. Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 900 Natural Resources Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903, 434-977-2974, [www.abc.state.va.us](http://www.abc.state.va.us)

### Department of Health Permit

Before a food establishment license can be issued by the Business License Department, the Health Department must be contacted to obtain a Health Department permit. Charlottesville/Albemarle Health Department, 1138 Rose Hill Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903, 434-972-6269. [www.vdh.state.va.us](http://www.vdh.state.va.us)

### Environmental Regulations

Businesses operating in Albemarle County are subject to environmental regulations and laws at both the state and national level. Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Valley Regional Office, 4411 Early Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22801, (540) 574-7800, <http://www.deq.state.va.us/regulations/laws.html> and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 3 Regional Office, 1650 Arch St, Philadelphia, PA 19103, 800-438-2474.

### Labor Requirements

Businesses operating in Albemarle County are subject to the terms regarding minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Virginia state law. U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave, NW, Washington DC, 20210, 866-487-2365, <http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/>, and Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, 13 S 13th St, Richmond, VA 23219, 804-371-2327.

### OSHA

OSHA (or, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration) is an agency in the U.S. Department of Labor responsible for the enforcement of safety and health legislation. Employers must provide their employees with a workplace that does not have serious hazards, and follow all relevant OSHA safety and health standards. OSHA offers resources targeted as small businesses, such as free on-site consultation regarding potential occupational hazards. Occupational Safety & Health Administration, 200 Constitution Ave NW, Washington DC, 20210, 800-321-6742

### Register a Trade Name or General Partnership

General partnership and trade names must be registered with the Clerk of the Circuit Court or an application can be taken at the Business License Department. Clerk of the Circuit Court, 501 East Jefferson Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902, 434-972-4084

### Register a Corporation or Limited Partnership

All corporations (foreign and domestic) and limited partnerships conducting business in Virginia must register with the Virginia State Corporation Commission. To become incorporated in Virginia an organization must file trade names, "Doing Business As," Articles of Incorporation and amendments with the SCC. State Corporation Commission, P.O. Box 1197, Richmond, VA 23209, 804-371-9733. [www.state.va.us/scc/index.html](http://www.state.va.us/scc/index.html)

### State Contractors License

All contractors who bid upon or undertake jobs of \$1,000 or more must register with the State Board of Contractors. Board of Contractors, 3600 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230, 804-367-8511, [www.dpor.state.va.us](http://www.dpor.state.va.us). The Contractor's licenses are classified by the levels: Class A- \$70,000 or more, Class B - \$7,500 to \$70,000, and Class C - \$1,000 to \$7,500.

### Workforce Resources

The Workforce Center at 2211 Hydraulic Road offers free services to both employment seekers and employers. They accept walk-ins as well as appointments. 434-977-2662 [http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/field/field\\_offices.cfm/flldoffice/5](http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/field/field_offices.cfm/flldoffice/5)

## BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PARTNERS

### Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CV SBDC)

For established firms, emerging companies or aspiring entrepreneurs, the Virginia SBDC offers counseling, training and information resources directed especially at small businesses. 210 Ridge McIntire Rd Suite 250, Charlottesville, VA 22902, 434-295-8198, <http://www.virginiاسبdc.org/default.aspx>

### Charlottesville Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is an effective business advocate, promoting business and working to enhance the quality of life in the Greater Charlottesville area by encouraging member enterprises to participate actively in public policy matters. Members of the Chamber may participate in events such as the Chamber Business Academy, Leadership seminars, and the Chamber Nonprofit/Business Council, among other services. 209 5th St NE, Fifth and Market Streets, Charlottesville, VA 22902, 434-295-3141, <http://www.cvillechamber.com/>

### Charlottesville Workforce Center

The “One-Stop” facility offers free services and training programs for job seekers; the facility also offers free services for employers looking to hire. The Center is a collaborative program between several state agencies and local programs. Their operation is located at 2211 Hydraulic Road, Charlottesville. Center hours are from 9:00 to 5:00, walk-ins are welcome. To reach a specialist, call 434-977-2662.

### Local Food Hub

Local Food Hub is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and secure the future of a healthy regional food supply by providing small farmers with concrete services that support their economic vitality and promote stewardship of the land. 434-286-2176, <http://localfoodhub.org>.

### Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Central Virginia

This nonprofit is committed to the education, formation, growth, and success of small businessmen in the central Virginia area. They offer counseling sessions and workshops written and conducted by retired executives with years of business experience. Counseling sessions are free, while workshops are available for a nominal fee. East Market and Fifth Streets, Suite 200, Charlottesville, VA 22902, 434-295-6712, <http://www.score-494.org/>

### Stultz Center, Piedmont Virginia Community College

The mission of Stultz Center is to provide customized training at PVCC Workforce Services in support of excellent and innovative workforce training programs for incumbent workers employed in private industry, government and nonprofits. For more information, please contact Gail White, Program Manager, PVCC Workforce Services, [gwhite@pvcc.edu](mailto:gwhite@pvcc.edu), 434-961-5330.

### Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development (TJPED)

The TJPED works closely with the CVSBDC and the Piedmont Workforce Network (PWN) to provide economic research, site selection assistance, training and technical assistance with information, seminars, and individual counseling, as well as workforce development solutions such as recruitment, screening, training and placement services through its combined resources and staff. 2211 Hydraulic Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901, 434-979-5610, <http://www.typed.com/>

### Virginia Department of Business Assistance

The Virginia DBA offers information on the Virginia Jobs Investment Program, the Virginia Small Business Finance Authority (which offers business loans specifically for small businesses), and Business Information Services such as free Entrepreneur Express seminars and “Starting a Business” planning software. 1220 Bank Street, 3rd Floor South, Richmond, VA 23219, 804-371-8200, <http://www.dba.virginia.gov/>

### Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)

The VEDP includes applicable business information about all counties in Virginia, as well as an advance on-line site selection tool to help discover the best location for a business based on specific workplace needs. 901 East Byrd Street, P.O. Box 798, Richmond, VA 23218, 804-545-5700 <http://www.yesvirginia.org/>.

### Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

The Virginia Farm Bureau is a non-governmental, nonpartisan, voluntary organization working to protecting Virginia’s farms through legislative lobbying, leadership and development programs, insurance products, and other services. Information about their member benefits, as well as helpful agricultural information can be found on their website. Virginia Farm Bureau, 12580 West Creek Pkwy, Richmond, VA 23238, 804-290-1000, <http://www.vafarmbureau.org/Pages/default.aspx>



## THE ALBEMARLE ADVANTAGE

A great place to live and work



- Stable, well-run government
- AAA bond rating
- Home to the University of Virginia & Piedmont Virginia Community College
- Terrific public school system
- Thriving high-technology companies and employee base
- Competitive real estate & property taxes
- Excellent parks and natural areas
- An abundance of cultural, historical & leisure opportunities
- Low crime rate
- Strong entrepreneurial focus

Find out more online at [www.albemarle.org/business!](http://www.albemarle.org/business)

### ALBEMARLE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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