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Two local programs honored with Virginia economic development grants

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Two local initiatives will soon have more help in supporting local businesses thanks to \$100,000 in funds awarded to the City of Harrisonburg from the 2022 Virginia Statewide Business District Resurgence Grant.

The grant, which was announced Wednesday by Gov. Ralph Northam’s office, will provide \$50,000 to the Bricks & Clicks program, and another \$50,000 to the B-Cubed: Black- and Brown-Owned Business Growth Program. Bricks & Clicks, led by Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR), is a partnership between Harrisonburg Economic Development (HED), the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (SVSBDC) and JMU’s School of Professional and Continuing Education. B-Cubed, led by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce, brings together HDR, HED, SVSBDC and JMU in a unique initiative.

“We are thrilled that two of our partnership initiatives have been recognized by the state with this funding.” Harrisonburg Economic Development Assistant Director Peirce Macgill said. “The partnerships surrounding Bricks & Clicks and B-Cubed are the strength of Harrisonburg’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, and this grant will help us make an even bigger impact.”

B-Cubed seeks to create a welcoming culture that will attract new Black- and Brown-owned business ventures to the area, and will encourage increasing investment from existing businesses in Harrisonburg.

“As a founding member of the B-Cubed program, this recognition from the state shows what we’ve known for years: that a diverse business community equals a thriving business community,” Christopher Jones, Chair of the Chamber’s Diversity Business Council and a Harrisonburg City Council member, said. “I’m looking forward to continuing our work and growing the reputation of the program. Dreams of entrepreneurship can come to fruition for Black and Brown people in our area.”

Bricks & Clicks, which won the 2020 Community Economic Development Award from the Virginia Economic Developers Association, is a multi-year, multi-phased, multi-jurisdictional approach to the economic development principle of growing your own entrepreneurs from within your community. The “Bricks” part of the program focuses on their storefront marketing, with the “Clicks” portion focusing on improving a business’s online presence and e-commerce. B-Cubed is based on the Bricks & Clicks model but includes networking and additional coaching support from business advisors.

“Small businesses that took a big hit in 2020 are still recovering, so we are thrilled to supplement our fund-raising efforts to invest even more than expected in Downtown entrepreneurs,” HDR Executive Director Andrea Dono said. “This investment will help us ensure Downtown continues to be a vibrant attraction for tourism and talent as well as enhancing the quality of life for residents.”

Find more information on B-Cubed at <https://www.hrchamber.org/business-assistance>.

Find more information on Bricks & Clicks at <https://downtownharrisonburg.org/grants/bricks-clicks>.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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