



# **SOUTHERN VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER (SVHEC)**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Founded in 1986, the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) is an award-winning hub for affordable higher education and job training. The organization is committed to improving communities by advancing the workforce and driving economic growth in southern Virginia.

## MISSION

To advance Southern Virginia's economic potential through education, innovation, and collaboration.

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center provides the facilities, resources and staff that help people access a wide variety of educational opportunities, connect employers to southern Virginia's talent and strengthen the local community.

## VISION

Educational Victories = Economic Strength

## VALUES

The six core values of Collaboration, Integrity, Respect, Customer Focus, Stewardship, and Innovation form the foundation of a thriving workplace culture at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center. These values guide employee behavior, decision-making, and interactions, fostering an environment of trust, ethical conduct, and mutual respect.



## STORY

For almost 40 years, the SVHEC has been helping people in Southern Virginia transform their lives by harnessing the power of education – on their own terms. The organization began operations in 1986 out of a modest 500 square-foot mobile unit on the grounds of the local high school. Since then, SVHEC has become a state agency and operates out of three repurposed tobacco warehouses donated by local benefactors and renovated with community bonds, private donations, historic tax credits and various state and federal grants as well as one commercial space located in a renovated textile factory.

Today, the SVHEC is an epicenter of education and job training in Southern Virginia. The organization’s campus features 106,230 square feet of technically sophisticated space including high-tech classrooms and labs featuring simulation technology focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Healthcare (STEM-H).

Through a unique partnership with community colleges and state universities, SVHEC provides convenient, affordable access to college degree programs and job training opportunities in Halifax County, VA. The organization also provides short-term, hands-on credential-based training in information technology, automation & robotics, welding, and HVAC-R to help citizens go from “zero to career” in less than a year. For more information about job training at SVHEC, click here: <https://www.svhec.org/job-training/>.

The SVHEC seeks to help both new and existing businesses and industries remain productive and profitable. Therefore, SVHEC offers employers the opportunity to partner on customized, innovative training solutions that support their evolving workforce needs.

**SVHEC partners with the following colleges, universities, and others to offer a variety of classes and degrees:**



## SOUTHERN VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE SVHEC

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Foundation is organized and operated exclusively to promote and advance Southern Virginia's economic potential, viability and competitiveness by the support and encouragement of the development of high level educational and job skill advancement opportunities within the region for its residents. For more information about the Foundation, click here: <https://svhef.org/>.

## MISSION

To promote and enhance continuing educational opportunities for the citizens of Halifax County, VA and the surrounding area.

## SVHEF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The SVHEF Scholarship program supports students enrolled in college degree or job training programs at the SVHEC. Each year, the Foundation awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to provide access to education in southern Virginia.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE ABOUT SVHEC FROM DR. BETTY ADAMS](#)



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**COLLABORATION** involves working together to achieve common goals by combining diverse skills and knowledge. It encompasses active listening, clear communication, embracing others' ideas, and offering support.

**INTEGRITY** means being truthful, accountable, and consistently upholding ethical principles even when faced with challenges. It involves honesty, ethical decision-making, owning mistakes, and respecting confidentiality.

**RESPECT** entails treating all colleagues with courtesy, empathy, and kindness. It involves creating an inclusive atmosphere, valuing diverse perspectives, and providing constructive feedback.

**CUSTOMER FOCUS** prioritizes understanding and meeting customer needs through active listening, timely responses, and high-quality service.

**STEWARDSHIP** involves using company resources efficiently and responsibly. It encompasses resource efficiency, long-term planning, sustainable practices, and considering the impact on future generations.

**INNOVATION** encourages pursuing new ideas, being adaptable to change, and finding creative solutions despite setbacks. It thrives on collaboration, continuous improvement, and calculated risk-taking.

By prioritizing customer needs, responsibly managing resources, and encouraging creative problem-solving, the SVHEC is built on a strong, value-driven culture that supports long-term success and employee engagement.



The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) is located in three repurposed, historic textile and tobacco warehouses in downtown South Boston, VA.

Dating back to 1850, the 820 Bruce Street Building once was a tobacco processing warehouse owned by Export Leaf Tobacco. The building was donated to the Foundation by local benefactors. In 2001, the SVHEC occupied the renovated Bruce Street Building. During the building's renovation, many of its historic features were retained, allowing the use of modern necessities like high-speed computers, plasma screens and wireless hot spots while enjoying the charm of the original elevator's framing and structure, fire doors that were once activated by ropes and 1850s bucket-and-fan humidifiers. The mix of old and new exemplifies the role southern Virginia and tobacco played in the early days of industrial development, and the progressive role the SVHEC plays in the future of the region's economic revitalization.

The Innovation Center (the old American Tobacco Warehouse) dates back to 1890 and was referred to locally as the "Bag Factory." The building was donated to the Southern Virginia Higher Education Foundation in December 2007, adding an additional 46,000 ft. of space to the SVHEC campus. After another historic renovation, the former bag factory was transformed into the Innovation Center. It is home to some of the SVHEC [job training programs](#) and the Career Tech Academy.

In the spring of 2019, the ground floor of [Imperial Lofts](#), located 0.3 miles away, became home to [ProductWorks @ SVHEC](#) which was relocated from the Innovation Center. [ProductWorks @ SVHEC](#) is the manufacturing resource and one-stop-shop where technology, creativity and industry insight connect. Imperial Lofts is a renovated, mixed-use commercial space constructed in the 1890s. The building originally was used as a tobacco processing facility, and later, for textile manufacturing.



## ESCAPE TO SOUTHERN VIRGINIA

Halifax County is more than a place to reside; it's a lifestyle enriched by natural beauty, community spirit, and a commitment to growth. Halifax County boasts a diverse real estate market, offering everything from historic homes with Southern charm to modern apartments catering to various lifestyles.

Halifax County offers an affordable cost of living while providing residents with a comfortable lifestyle. Reasonable housing options and everyday expenses contribute to the county's appeal as an economically favorable place to call home. Discover the charm, embrace the warmth, and make Halifax County your home sweet home.

## THE STARS SHINE BRIGHTER

From rich history, over one hundred miles of navigable blueways, cultural offerings at The Prizery, spirits, wine, and beer handcrafted by locals, delicious fare for any meal of the day, and inviting places to lay your head, Halifax County is ideal for individuals, couples, families, and groups of friends. Halifax is your place to reconnect, unwind, get revved up, or savor the sip, bite, and moment.

## EDUCATING FOR THE FUTURE

Halifax County is a community that has transformed its historic pride into a remarkable focus on the future and a viable new economy. The distinctly southern and rural quality of life is accented by Halifax County's close proximity to larger cities.

A crucial element in the future of the county is its public school system. Helping every student realize his or her maximum potential, Halifax County Public Schools (HCPS) offers exceptional learning opportunities. Teachers, parents, business leaders, and volunteers are the greatest asset of HCPS. From Pre-K through high school, students in the Halifax County Public School system are a part of a nurturing, supportive, and innovative learning environment. Halifax County takes pride in its public schools. The future of Halifax County's school system is enhanced by over \$50 million in planning capital improvements.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Population

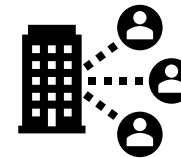
Town of Halifax  
**1,188**



Town of  
South Boston  
**7,863**

Halifax County  
**33,644**

### Workforce



# of Businesses  
**677**

Employment Rate  
**96.1%**

### Home Life

Households  
**13,519**



Median Household  
Income  
**\$49,145**

[Click here for more information  
on Halifax County, Virginia.](#)

## AGENCY PRIORITIES

For almost 40 years, the SVHEC has been helping people in Southern Virginia transform their lives by harnessing the power of education – on their own terms. Operations began in 1986 out of a modest 500 square-foot mobile unit on the grounds of the local high school. Today, SVHEC is an epicenter of education and job training, occupying 106,230 square feet of technically sophisticated space.

### **2024 – 2026 Strategic Goals:**

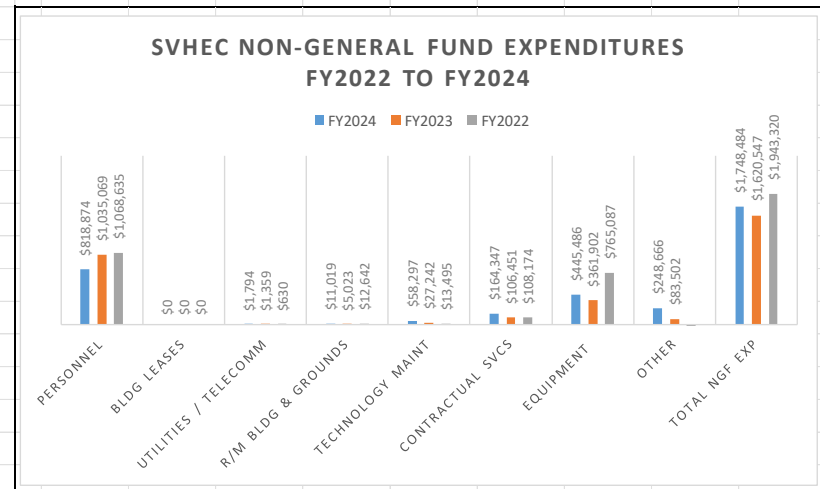
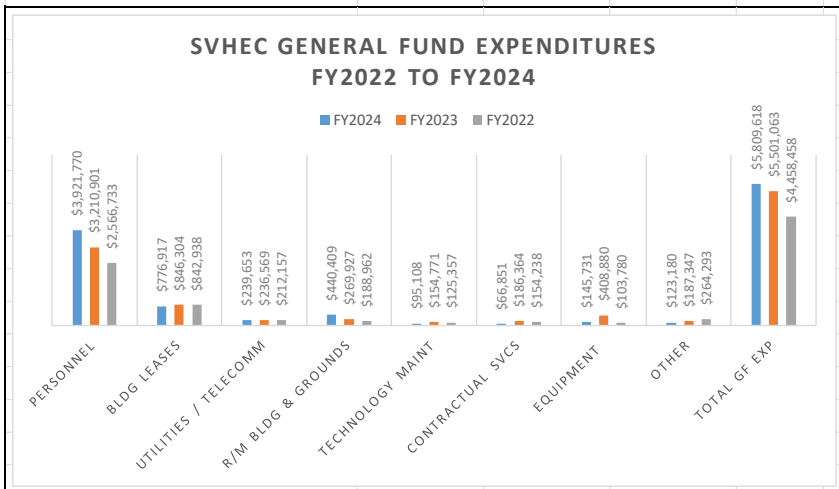
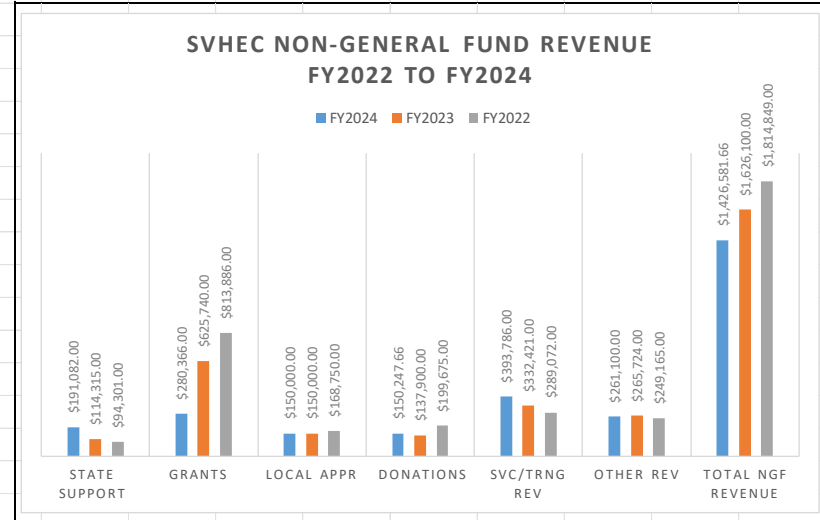
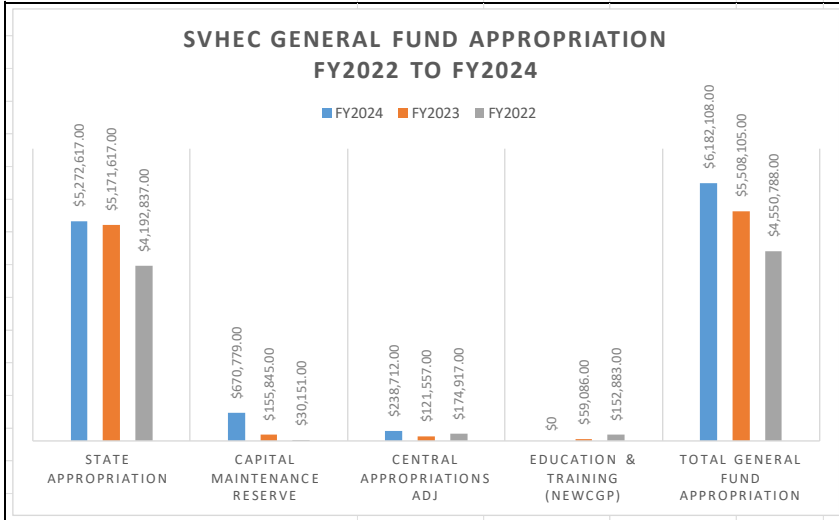
The strategic plan encompasses five broad goals.

- › Increase levels of community educational attainment
- › Encourage and support collaborations that address regional workforce education and training needs by leveraging southern Virginia's economic and educational assets
- › Provide focused support services to help workforce training students succeed while maintaining campus environments that support the learning goals of all students
- › Anticipate facilities, operational, and staff changes required for future growth
- › Maintain a sound and sustainable business model

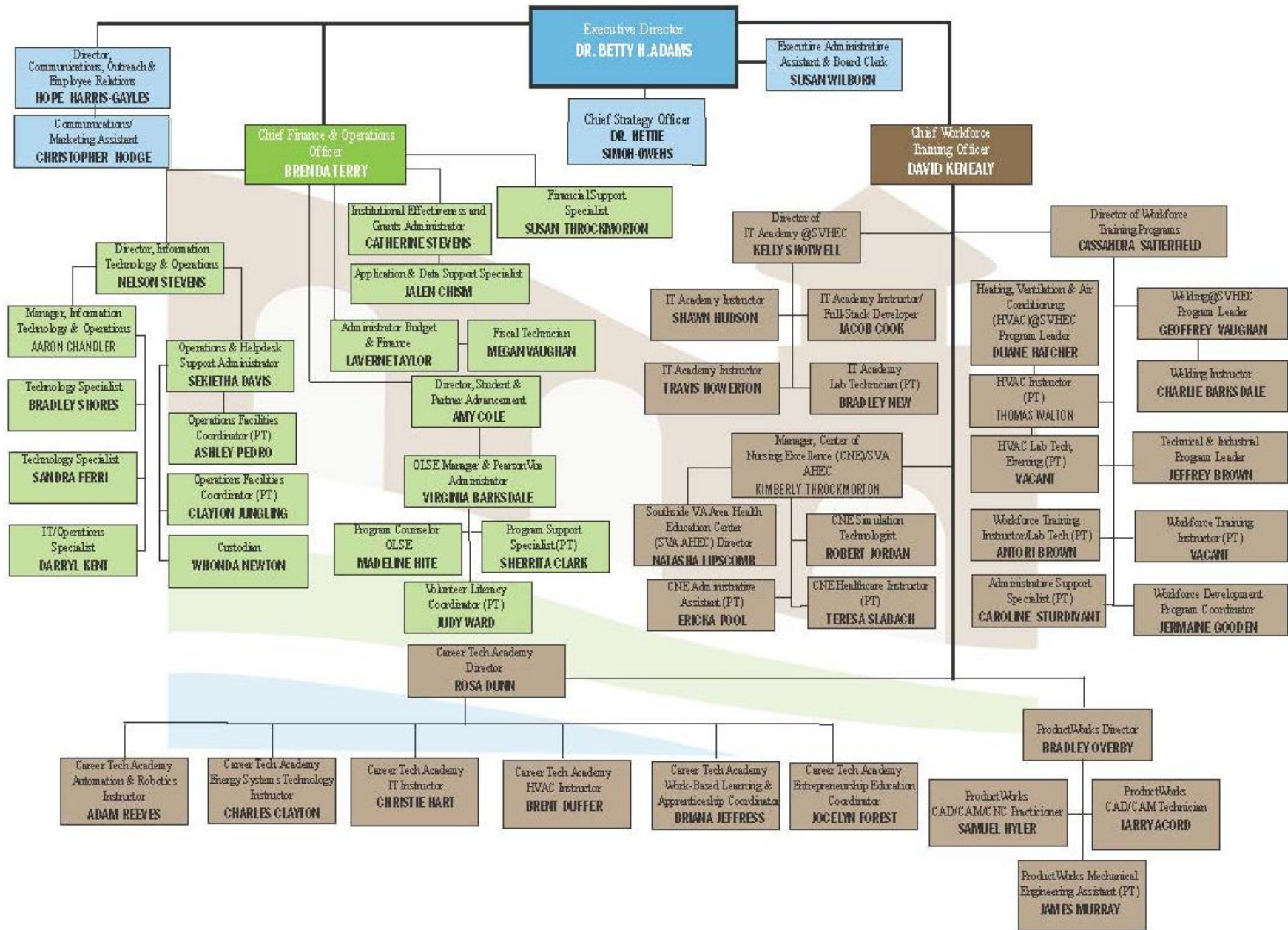
[Click here to read more about the SVHEC Strategic Plan](#)



## SVHEC Financials FY2022 to FY2024



Note: Increases in NGF expenditures in FY2024 resulted from the purchase of equipment and furnishings for the new HVAC training lab as well as inflationary impacts that resulted in higher costs for educational supplies, contractual services, and software maintenance costs.



# JOB DESCRIPTION: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## SUMMARY:

Fahrenheit Advisors is pleased to lead the search process for the next Executive Director of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, a state agency located in South Boston, VA. This is an incredible opportunity for a strategic leader with a passion for student success and access to opportunity to take a well-established organization into the next phase. This role will make a huge impact in a rural community, and you will work with a talented and committed team of professionals towards that mission.

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) in South Boston, VA is a dynamic multi-institutional campus designed to foster higher education, workforce training, and economic development opportunities in Southern Virginia. By partnering with private and public-school systems, local universities, community colleges, and industry leaders, SVHEC delivers hands-on, cutting-edge training in IT, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and more. SVHEC serves as a bridge between education and workforce development, addressing the needs of both students and employers, with a focus on helping to drive the region's economic vitality.

The Executive Director (ED) of SVHEC serves as the chief executive and visionary leader responsible for implementing the organization's strategic plan, fostering collaborative community partnerships, and ensuring organizational sustainability. Reporting directly to the Board of Trustees, the ED will manage all operational, financial, and strategic facets of the institution. The ED must possess the leadership, vision, and adaptability needed to drive growth while maintaining a positive, inclusive culture that supports the mission of SVHEC. Positions reporting to the ED are: Chief Finance & Operations Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Workforce Training Officer, Director of Communications, Outreach & Employee Relations, and Executive Assistant & Board Clerk.

## CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

### › Leadership Style & Decision-Making:

- › Inclusive & Collaborative Leadership: Involve the Leadership Team (LT) and staff in brainstorming and problem-solving processes, fostering an environment of open communication and input at all levels.
- › Internal Communication: Build strong internal communication and accessibility to leadership. Ensure a non-partisan approach to decision-making and reinforce SVHEC's open-door policy.
- › Succession Planning: Prioritize long-term planning, addressing the concerns of an aging leadership team and ensuring smooth succession aligned with state regulations.
- › Soft Skills: Emphasize approachability, transparency, and the ability to listen and motivate staff, promoting a positive, inclusive organizational culture.

› **Industry & Community Relations:**

- › Industry Experience: Leverage private industry experience to align SVHEC's programs with workforce needs and to connect effectively with local business leaders.
- › Rural Background & Community Adaptation: Have experience in or be adaptable to working in a rural environment, understanding the unique challenges of the region's workforce.
- › Partnerships & Outreach: Strengthen regional partnerships and engage collaboratively with political figures, industry leaders, and the broader community to create new opportunities for growth.

› **Organizational Goals & Strategy:**

- › Program Evaluation: Regularly evaluate existing programs for relevance, making necessary adaptations to meet evolving community and workforce needs.
- › Financial Acumen: Demonstrate strong budget management focusing on revenue diversification, grant acquisition, and innovative funding solutions to ensure SVHEC's long-term financial health.
- › Community Leadership: Serve as an active and engaged leader within the community, sitting on various boards and contributing to local and regional strategic planning efforts.

› **Management and Administration:**

- › Operational Oversight: Oversee all SVHEC operations, ensuring that day-to-day activities are managed efficiently and effectively.
- › Program Quality: Assure program quality and organizational stability through the development and implementation of systems, standards, and controls.
- › Staff Development: Create a work environment that attracts, retains, and supports high-quality staff by fostering staff development and regularly evaluating performance.
- › Financial Strategies: Recommend staffing and financial strategies to the Board and manage professional contracts and salary structures.

- › **Community Relations:**
  - › Marketing and Communications: Integrate SVHEC into the community through effective marketing and communications strategies.
  - › Spokesperson: Serve as the chief spokesperson for SVHEC, representing the organization to donors, industry partners, and the public.
  - › Collaborative Relationships: Initiate and maintain collaborative relationships with local, state, and regional stakeholders, fostering partnerships that drive workforce and educational development.
  - › Policy Promotion: Work closely with legislators, regulatory agencies, and community leaders to promote policies that support educational access and innovation.
- › **Governance:**
  - › Board Support: Support the Board in fulfilling its governance role by facilitating strategic discussions, policy development, and oversight functions.
  - › Due Diligence: Manage the Board's due diligence processes, ensuring timely attention to critical issues.
  - › Board Participation: Encourage Board members' active participation in fundraising, governance, and community outreach.
- › **Legal Compliance:**
  - › Regulatory Compliance: Ensure that all legal and regulatory documents are filed and that SVHEC complies with relevant laws and regulations.

## KEY QUALIFICATIONS

- › A Master's degree is preferred, with a minimum of 10 years of experience in a senior leadership position, preferably in higher education, workforce development, government administration, economic development or industry. A blend of several of these backgrounds is extremely ideal.
- › Demonstrated experience in budgeting, grant acquisition, and financial management.
- › A proven track record in fostering partnerships with government, industry, and educational institutions.
- › A background in private industry, higher education, or public administration, with experience managing both strategic initiatives and day-to-day operations.
- › Strong communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders.
- › Experience working in or familiarity with rural communities is an asset.
- › Ideal candidate will reside within Halifax County, VA and relocation assistance will be provided.

**Physical Demands/Working Conditions:** This is a high-stress position that requires balancing multiple responsibilities simultaneously and making rapid decisions. The Executive Director will handle complex tasks, manage relationships with various stakeholders, and work irregular hours to meet organizational demands. Flexibility and resilience are crucial for success in this role.

# SALARY & COMPENSATION SUMMARY

Benefit	Employer/Employee Paid
Health Plans	<p>There is an option to choose from <u>a variety of health plan options</u> that can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVA Care</li> <li>• COVA HealthAware</li> <li>• COVA HDHP</li> <li>• Kaiser Permanente HMO</li> <li>• Optima Health Vantage HMO</li> <li>• Tricare</li> </ul>
PTO	<p>200 hours of PTO, plus holidays:</p> <p>New Years Day; Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Memorial Day; Juneteenth; Independence Day; Labor Day; Election Day; Day before Thanksgiving Day (4 hours); Thanksgiving Day; Day after Thanksgiving; Christmas Day</p>
Retirement	<p>Access to Virginia Retirement System (VRS)            Deferred Compensation: The Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan is a tax-deferred retirement savings program. Participation in the plan is automatic and is a supplement to the VRS retirement benefit.</p>
Other	<p>Cell phone stipend of \$45 per month</p>
Relocation Assistance	<p>Relocation assistance will be provided if necessary</p>
Compensation	<p>Minimum starting salary is \$180,401</p>

## SEARCH COMMITTEE

On March 27, 2024, Dr. Betty Adams, Executive Director of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center announced plans to retire from her position. Read the announcement [here](#).



Tom Raab  
Former Town Manager, South Boston  
VCCS Chancellor Designee  
Executive Committee Member, SVHEC Board of Trustees



Stanley Jeffress, Jr.  
President, S.L. Jeffress Company, Inc.  
Chair, SVHEC Board of Trustees



Jeffrey Davis  
Assistant Superintendent for Operations,  
Halifax County Public Schools  
Vice-Chair, SVHEC Board of Trustees



Dr. Quentin Johnson  
President, Southside Virginia Community College  
Executive Committee Member, SVHEC Board of Trustees



Sheri McGuire  
AVP for Community and Economic Development,  
Longwood University  
Executive Committee Member, SVHEC Board of Trustees



Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens  
Chief Strategy Officer, SVHEC  
Staff Liaison to ED Search Committee

## TARGETED SEARCH TIMELINE:

November 1, 2024 – January 2025: Interviews will be conducted by Fahrenheit Advisors  
January – February 2025: Virtual interview and In-Person interviews conducted by search committee  
March 25, 2025: Target start date for new Executive Director



## Sarah Gobble

Director, Executive Search & Recruiting | Fahrenheit Advisors | Richmond, VA  
sgobble@fahrenheitadvisors.com

Fahrenheit Advisors' client portfolio demonstrates successful search engagements across the U.S., from C-suite positions to middle-management roles. Our experience encompasses organizations of all sizes, across a wide variety of industries and in public, privately held, PE-owned, nonprofit and government organizations.

Fahrenheit Advisors' uniqueness and years of expertise add up to sophisticated insight: Knowledge and know-how to help companies navigate the difficult task of selecting high-impact team additions and candidates in making the right choices on career transitions.

I will partner with you to ensure you have everything you need to make an informed decision about your next career opportunity. We will work together from start to finish to navigate this opportunity and make sure it's a great fit for the next step in your career.

### TO APPLY:

If you think your qualifications are a match and you are interested in further pursuing this position, please click [HERE](#) to view the entire job description and formally apply.