



GOAL 1: ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

Grow the regional economy through the retention, expansion, and attraction of **innovative companies**. Cultivate a robust entrepreneurship eco-system. Consistently focus on **high-growth, technology-driven industries**.

STRENGTHS

- Home to six of Inc. 5000's fastest growing U.S. companies
- Well-established as a premier destination for visitors and new residents
- Wealth of amenities and high quality of life
- Entrepreneurs, innovative companies, creative workers, and technology that differentiate Asheville from other communities in respect to talent and the economy

Buncombe County already has many of the ingredients needed to transform the regional economy around innovation. Venture Asheville, the EDC's entrepreneurship program, has planted seeds that will yield future economic growth. In addition, much of the region's recent job growth is taking place in technologically advanced companies. Embracing innovation, creative industries and technology as core components of its economic development strategy is vital for the community's long-term success.

FOCUS AREAS

- Support of Venture Asheville
- Satellite offices of high-growth firms based in large East Coast markets
- Sustainable Business

Venture Asheville grows Asheville's startup community and connects entrepreneurs to talent, mentors and funding.



Visuals left-right: Digital Chalk, Brightfield Transportation Systems, Plum Print, Cloud for Good, RISC Networks, and Theraworx

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION



Visuals: 1) FLS Energy, 2) The Cheat Sheet, 3) 1 Million Cups Asheville, and 4) Asheville Startup Weekend

HIGHLIGHTED STRATEGIES

- Through VentureAsheville.com, promote Asheville’s entrepreneurship ecosystem, acting as a centralized hub to efficiently connect entrepreneurs, talent, and investors to one another and to startup resources.
- Showcase Asheville and Buncombe County as a community that is welcoming and supportive of businesses that value and practice sustainability.
- Work with the Asheville Angels to expand access to equity funding within the greater Asheville area, and form a regional syndication network to improve deal flow for Asheville area companies and investors.
- Launch a mentor program that connects regional business executives with entrepreneurs to expose emerging business leaders to the experience and expertise of seasoned executives.
- Support an “Asheville Fiber” initiative.
- Target high-growth and Inc. 5000 firms from major East Coast markets (like Boston, New York, and D.C.) where there are existing business ties to Asheville for expansion/relocation into Asheville-Buncombe County.