

Who we are and what we do:  
Economic development in Fairfax County, Virginia

The economy of Fairfax County, Virginia, has evolved into what Time magazine called “one of the great economic success stories of our time.” Once a rural community and the leading dairy producer in Virginia, the county became a suburban bedroom community for the nation’s capital of Washington, D.C., and in the late 1970s the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors charged the Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) with building a commercial tax base for the county. The FCEDA does that by promoting the county as one of the world’s best business locations, working with companies to establish and expand operations here.

Today, Fairfax County is recognized as one of the world’s best and most diverse business locations and technology centers. It is home to everything from Fortune 500 companies to some of the nation’s fastest-growing companies. It has become a popular U.S. touch down point for international companies – more than 410 foreign-owned companies have a presence in Fairfax County – and it is home to one of the most dynamic minority-owned business communities in the nation. Fairfax County is widely recognized as the economic engine of the Washington area and Virginia.

Fairfax County businesses today are among the world leaders in business and professional services, especially in technology sectors such as aerospace, software, telecommunications, defense and homeland security technology, cybersecurity, new media and Internet technology. Fairfax County also is a hub for venture capitalists who finance emerging technology companies and entrepreneurs. The FCEDA has launched an aggressive effort to promote the county to life-science companies.

Fairfax County is the second-largest suburban office market in the U.S., with 117 million square feet of office space. Two commercial areas of Fairfax County, Tysons Corner and Reston, are among the largest central business districts in the U.S. More than 600,000 persons work in Fairfax County today.

Competitors for relocation and expansion prospects include the major markets of the United States, especially the Silicon Valley of California, Boston, and New York, and the world’s leading markets as well. Fairfax County employs marketing representatives in Bangalore, Berlin, London, Los Angeles, Seoul and Tel Aviv to work with companies in those important business centers that are interested in establishing operations in the Washington area.

Almost 1.2 million people live in Fairfax County, and that number is projected to increase to more than 1.4 million by 2030. The FCEDA will continue to provide a wide array of free and confidential services in order to attract and retain businesses, high-skilled workers and venture capital. A dynamic economic base will build the commercial tax base that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors uses to pay for the high-quality public services that a growing and diversifying population will want and need – and that support the quality of life for which Fairfax County is known around the nation and the world.