

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STARTUP Franklin Southampton Receives Excellence in  
Economic Development Award from the International Economic  
Development Council**

Washington, DC – STARTUP Franklin Southampton won a gold category award for the Neighborhood and Retail Development category of the 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards Program. The honor was presented October 15th at an awards ceremony during the IEDC Annual Conference.

‘We are honored to be accepting this internationally-recognized award in conjunction with the Downtown Franklin Association,’ Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. (FSEDI) Board Chairman Harrell Turner shares. “Investing in the entrepreneurial advancements of our community is one of our organizational pillars, and co-managing this program with the Downtown Franklin Association has helped us further that strategic goal.”

STARTUP Downtown Franklin was formed in 2017 after the Downtown Franklin Association received a Community Business Launch grant award from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The program was administered by Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. and the Downtown Franklin Association. The program can be broken down into four steps: Apply, Learn, Pitch, Win. Potential business owners apply to participate in the competition, they must attend six business classes taught by local professors and business stakeholders, they must submit a business plan and conduct a business pitch to a panel of judges, then three winners are announced based on the business plan and pitch scores. The grand prize winner receives \$20,000, the runner-up is awarded \$10,000, and third place is given \$8,000. All prize monies are administered as a reimbursable grant. Three iterations of the program were completed, with 8 new businesses open and operating in Downtown Franklin and 1 in Southampton County, Virginia.

IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and the year's most influential leaders. 35 award categories honor organizations and individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Awards are judged by a diverse panel of economic and community developers from around the world, following a nomination process held earlier this year. IEDC received over 500 submissions from 4 countries.

“The winners of IEDC’s Excellence in Economic Development awards represent the very best of economic development and exemplify the ingenuity, integrity, and leadership that our profession strives for each and every day”, said 2020 IEDC Board Chair and One Columbus CEO Kenny McDonald. “We’re honored to recognize the more than 100 communities whose marketing campaigns, projects and partnerships have measurably improved regional quality of life.”

### **About Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc.**

Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. (FSEDI) is a 501(c)3 non-profit representing the economic development efforts of the City of Franklin and Southampton County. The four areas of organizational focus are as follows: business attraction and retention, small business development, entrepreneurship and tourism.

### **About Downtown Franklin Association**

The Downtown Franklin Association, Inc. (DFA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation whose Mission is *to grow, nurture, and support the vitality of historic downtown, the heart of Franklin*. The vision of the DFA is to make downtown Franklin the place of choice to live, work, play and grow by pursuing economic partnerships and advocating local business growth, while enhancing the quality of life for our community and visitors.