



Regional Report

Southeast

AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA,
MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV



nvca

Regional Spotlight: Southeast

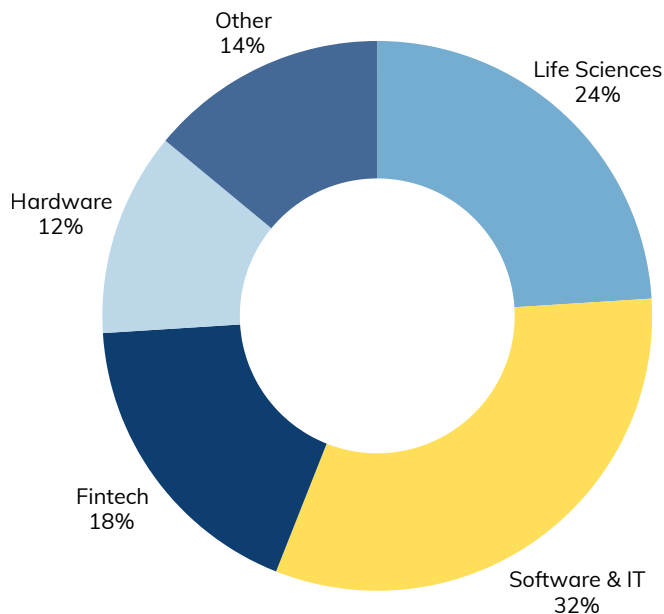


This report explores the venture capital ecosystem and its role in supporting startups, job creation, and economic growth across the Southeast. Produced by the National Venture Capital Association (NVCA), this series examines eight distinct regions (see map on final page) to highlight the unique strengths and contributions of each to the national innovation economy. NVCA is the leading trade association for the U.S. venture capital industry, advocating for policies that support entrepreneurship, capital formation, and the growth of high-growth companies.

The Southeast has become one of the country's most dynamic venture regions, shaped by rapid population growth, expanding talent pools, and a business climate that gives founders room to build with discipline and ambition [1,2]. Major hubs such as Atlanta, Nashville, Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, and Miami now anchor a region supported by leading universities and a deep bench of operators and investors. Taken together, the Southeast includes states that regularly rank among the nation's top tier on key venture metrics, alongside emerging markets that have generated some of the fastest growth rates in the country over the last decade. Lower costs and longer runways [1] allow startups in the Southeast to mature on stronger fundamentals, while investors across the region have embraced a measured approach that prioritizes traction and capital efficiency [2]. A robust network of accelerators, incubators, and state-backed programs further strengthens the pipeline from idea to commercialization. [1, 2]

Unlike regions anchored by a few dominant sectors, the Southeast's diverse mix of markets fosters innovation across many industries. Software and IT remain the largest drivers of venture activity, supported by deep corporate anchors and expanding engineering talent. Life sciences continues to grow, powered by leading research universities and strong clinical and regulatory expertise. Fintech maintains a meaningful foothold across the region, reflecting both legacy strengths and growing demand for financial infrastructure innovation. Construction, advanced manufacturing, agtech, aerospace, cybersecurity, and supply chain logistics also play meaningful roles, underscoring the Southeast's ability to support both digital and industrial innovation. Rather than relying on a single industry or city, the Southeast's strength comes from the combined scale of its metropolitan hubs and the wide range of technologies being developed across the region, a foundation that positions it for continued national influence.

Sector Breakdown of Southeast VC Investment:



888,919

The number of VC-backed startups jobs in the Southeast, as of 2022, the latest data available.

5,800

Startups in the Southeast are VC-backed (2024).

[1] "State of Startups 2025", Venture Atlanta

[2] "Why the Southeast Is the Hottest Region for Startups in 2025", Venture South

2nd

Region in the US in terms of growth in deal count with a 6.1% increase, behind only the Mid-Atlantic (2024).

\$12.3B

Deal flow in 2024.

3rd

Region in terms of deal count in 2024 with 1,631 deals.

\$69.8B

in AUM in 2024, an emerging VC ecosystem.

3rd

Region in terms of number of active investors in 2024 with 1,743 active investors.

\$3.8B

invested in North Carolina startups in 2024.

3rd

Region in terms of number of VC backed jobs behind the Mid-Atlantic and Far West.

\$3.7B

invested in Florida startups in 2024.

Startups in The Region



Critical data infrastructure remains vulnerable to cyber threats, natural disasters, and geopolitical disruption.

Lonestar Data Holdings is tackling this risk by building resilient, off-Earth data storage and computing systems. Headquartered in St. Petersburg, FL the company operates secure data platforms designed for space-based deployment, creating a new layer of global data resilience beyond terrestrial vulnerabilities.



The rapid growth of electric vehicles is straining global supply chains for critical battery materials while increasing environmental costs from traditional mining.

Ascend Elements addresses this challenge by creating a closed-loop, domestic supply of lithium-ion battery materials using recycled feedstock. With major operations in Covington, GA and Hopkinsville, KY, the company uses its patented Hydro-to-Cathode® technology to transform spent batteries directly into high-performance cathode materials, cutting greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90% while strengthening U.S. clean-energy manufacturing.



Forced entry and active shooter threats remain a serious risk for businesses, schools, churches and homeowners across the country. Nashville-based, veteran-founded HavenLock addresses this challenge

by designing and manufacturing advanced door lock and access control security systems. Its 4th generation lock combines exceptional strength with cutting-edge technology, offering 2,000 lbs of holding force in a compact design that installs in just 30 minutes at half the size and expense of traditional magnetic locks. It supports versatile connectivity options, including power-over-ethernet or low voltage power, and seamlessly integrates with the Alarm.com platform.

Across the Southeast, venture capital firms are fueling leading-edge industries, including:



Aerospace



Healthcare
IT



Construction

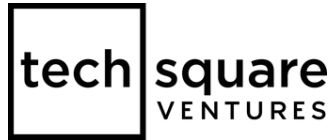


Supply Chain



Heavy
Manufacturing

VCs in The Region



Tech Square Ventures is an Atlanta-based early-stage venture capital firm that partners with visionary entrepreneurs, providing capital, connections, and collaboration. Founded in 2014 and rooted in Midtown Atlanta's Technology Square ecosystem, the firm invests primarily at the seed and early stages (including pre-seed and selective Series A) in enterprise/B2B, marketplace, platform, and tech-enabled services companies. Its themes include applied AI, logistics and supply chain, vertical solutions, infrastructure and productivity, and sustainability and energy, with a strong emphasis on the Southeast. The firm invests through Engage, a first-of-its-kind corporate innovation and startup accelerator program that connects global enterprises with leading entrepreneurs.

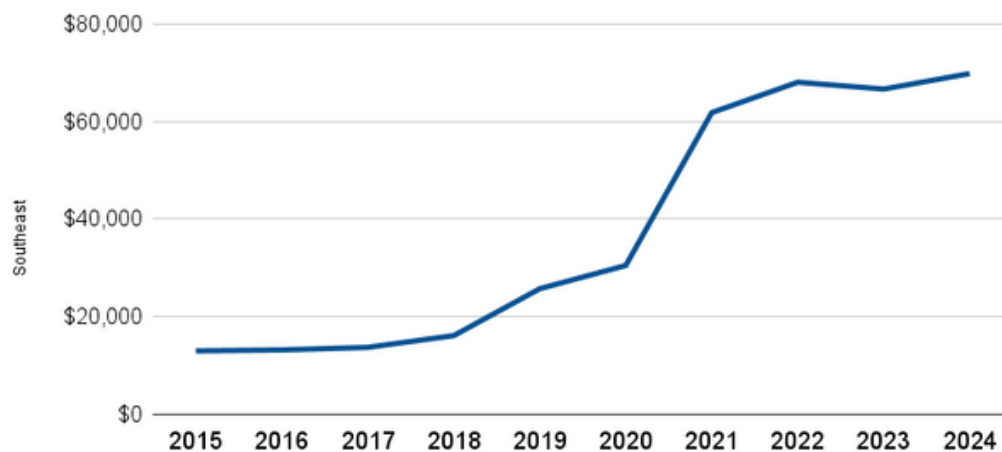
Veteran Ventures Capital is a veteran-owned firm that invests in and supports the growth of veteran-led businesses, a historically underrepresented community of entrepreneurs. VVC focuses on supporting leaders with defense and military experience—leaders who bring operational discipline, strategic clarity, and unmatched resilience to complex commercial and national security challenges. The firm's thesis is simple: the right teams, solving the right problems, in markets where execution wins. Headquartered in McLean, VA the majority of their investments are in early-stage businesses working at the nexus of national security and commercial technology.



Front Porch Venture Partners is a Raleigh-Durham, NC-based hybrid venture firm investing across the Southeast through both direct startup investments and partnerships with leading regional venture funds. Founded in 2020, the firm focuses on technology and healthcare companies and places strong emphasis on founder-market fit, diverse leadership, and capital-efficient growth. By leveraging deep local ties and a disciplined valuation approach, Front Porch is building a connected flywheel of founders and funders that strengthens the Southeast's rapidly expanding and often underappreciated venture ecosystem.



Assets Under Management (\$M)



2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
\$12,933.08	\$13,124.85	\$13,653.78	\$16,068.02	\$25,691.89	\$30,459.05	\$61,821.59	\$68,055.48	\$66,653.67	\$69,829.48

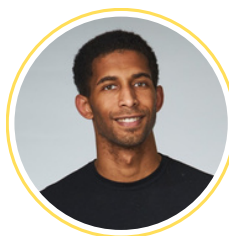
Startup Founders



Tom Adams is co-founder and CEO of Durham, NC-based Pairwise, which aims to address food system challenges by developing fruits and vegetables with enhanced traits to build a healthier world by making plants easier to grow and eat. Among other use cases, the company's gene editing tools are being used in coffee beans and bananas to address cultivation efficiencies and improve sustainable environmental practices.



Dr. Rebekah Gee, former Health Secretary of Louisiana, is the CEO and Founder of Nest Health, the first value-based healthcare provider built for whole families on Medicaid. An obstetrician gynecologist, Dr. Gee leads Nest's innovative model that brings primary, behavioral, and social care into the home through in-home care and wraparound virtual services. Nest partners with Medicaid health plans to reach families with high or rising risk and those disconnected from primary care. Eligible families receive comprehensive services through their existing insurance, which removes barriers like travel, long waits, and fragmented care so families can access trusted support for everyday and long-term health needs.



Chris Thompson, founder of Sober Sidekick, built the platform based on his personal experience overcoming addiction and time in sober living. Recognizing the over 40 million Americans who struggle, Sober Sidekick offers 24/7 peer-support and accountability. An independent study showed that actively engaged members experience a 48.2% reduction in relapse rates. This makes it a proven, scalable solution for health plans and systems to engage high-risk populations and reduce avoidable utilization and total cost of care.

The Southeast's Top Ranked States

Ranked by amount invested (2024):

- 1 NORTH CAROLINA
- 2 FLORIDA
- 3 VIRGINIA

Ranked by 10 year growth in the number of deals (2015-2024):

- 1 ALABAMA
- 2 FLORIDA
- 3 KENTUCKY

Ranked by 10 year growth in deal flow \$ (2015-2024):

- 1 ARKANSAS
- 2 SOUTH CAROLINA
- 3 FLORIDA

The Southeast's Leading States

#5

Florida ranks fifth out of all 50 states in terms of the number of deals in 2024.

#6

North Carolina ranks sixth out of all 50 states in terms of deal flow dollars in 2024.

#12

Georgia ranks twelfth out of all 50 states in terms of the five year growth in funds raised (2020-2024).

Venture Leaders



Adam D'Augelli is a Partner at True Ventures, a leading early-stage venture capital firm founded with a foundational mission to empower entrepreneurs at the initial stages of company creation. Adam joined True as an analyst in 2010, immediately after graduating magna cum laude from the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in science and a master's degree in finance. True was the first institutional investor in emerging startups like Ring, HashiCorp, Duo Security, Handshake, Iceye, Veza, and more.

Navid Farzad is a Managing Partner at Nashville-based Frist Cressey Ventures (FCV), where he focuses on investing in breakout healthcare companies transforming the delivery of care. He joined FCV in 2019 after serving as a partner at Morgan Noble Healthcare Partners, following earlier roles at Enhanced Healthcare Partners, Lehman Brothers' healthcare investment banking division, Ernst & Young's Transaction Advisory group, and Arthur Andersen's healthcare practice. Navid serves as a director or observer on the boards of several FCV companies as well as organizations, including the Nashville Healthcare Council, the National Venture Capital Association (NVCA), the Greater Nashville Private Capital Association, and The Hilltop Institute, a research and data analytics organization dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of communities. He holds a BA from Loyola University in Maryland and an MBA from the NYU Stern School of Business.



Jenny Schretter is a General Partner at Arlington, VA-headquartered PROOF where she invests in hypergrowth, breakout companies. Jenny has worked in the startup and venture capital ecosystem for over fifteen years as a founder and operator, advisor, and investor. Prior to joining PROOF, she served as a Venture Partner at Squadra Ventures and a Director at Dreamit Ventures. Jenny previously worked in Investment Management at Goldman Sachs & Co. in San Francisco, CA, where she and her partners managed \$16B+ in client and institutional assets. Jenny received her bachelor's degree from Boston College and her MBA from the Darden School of Business at University of Virginia.

The Southeast is a leader in agriculture

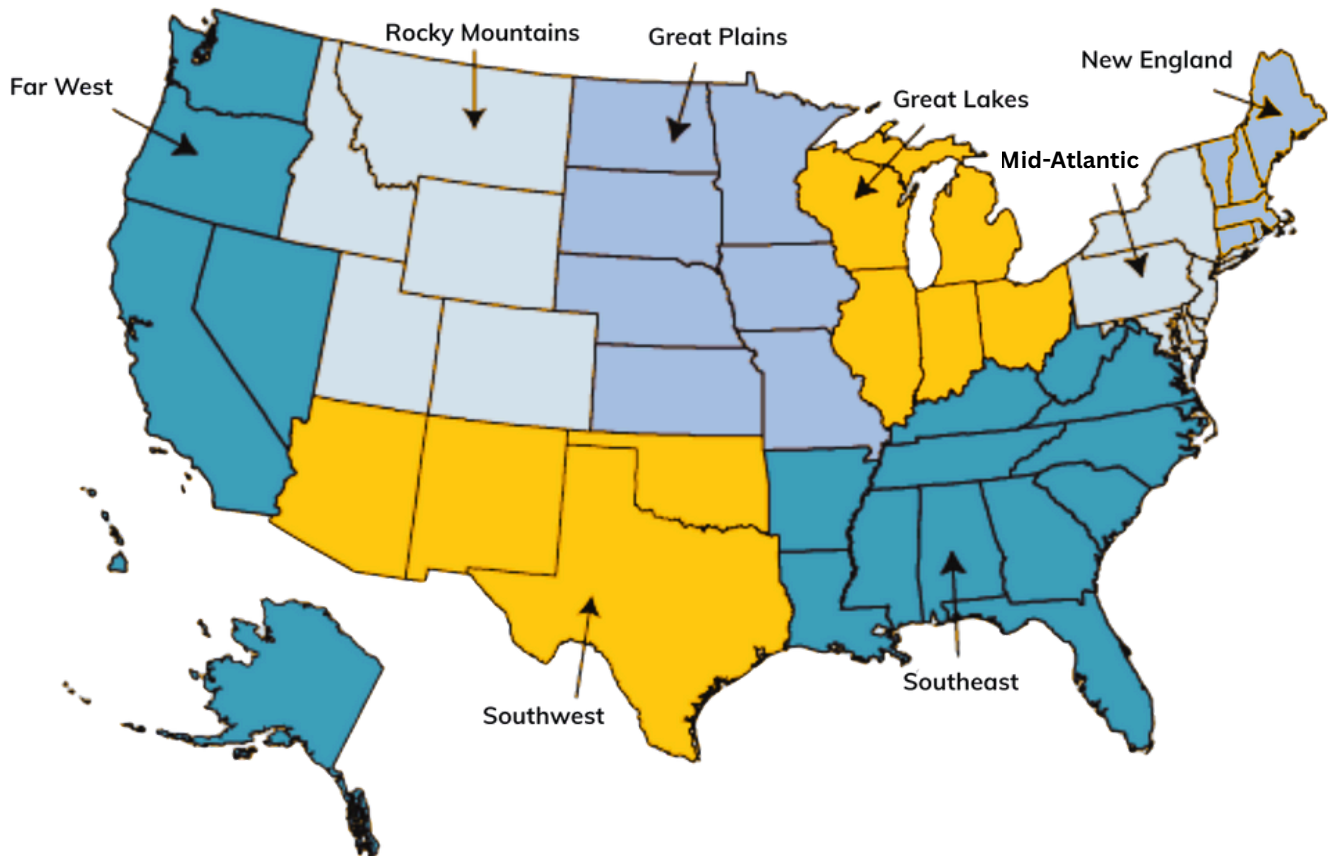
Subsector	Company	Headquarters
Produce Supply Chain	Plant-Ag	Fort Lauderdale, FL
Aquaculture	Open Blue Cobia	Miami, FL
Produce Hardiness	Pairwise	Durham, NC
Sectoral Investment (2003-2024): \$4 Billion		

...and a leader in safety & security.

Subsector	Company	Headquarters
Community Safety Tech	Flock Safety	Atlanta, GA
Fraud Detection	Pindrop	Atlanta, GA
Cybersecurity	IRU	Miami, FL
Sectoral Investment (2003-2024): \$12 Billion		

8 Regions of the United States

This regional reports series offers a comprehensive look at how venture capital shapes local economies and contributes to national growth. By examining eight distinct regions, as defined the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, NVCA highlights the diverse strengths, industries, and innovation drivers that power the U.S. startup ecosystem. Together, these reports provide a deeper understanding of how VC-backed companies create jobs, spur technological breakthroughs, and strengthen America's global competitiveness.



The National Venture Capital Association (NVCA) empowers the next generation of American companies that will fuel the economy of tomorrow. As the voice of the U.S. venture capital and startup community, NVCA advocates for public policy that supports the American entrepreneurial ecosystem. Serving the venture community as the preeminent trade association, NVCA arms the venture community for success, serving as the leading resource for venture capital data, practical education, peer-led initiatives, and networking.

For more information about NVCA, please visit www.nvca.org.

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