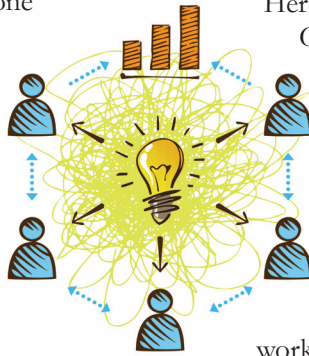


Better information, better decisions — and a better way to help your company!

You know more about your company than anyone else. But like most CEOs you could probably use some help when it comes to decisions about new markets, generating sales leads or deriving more value from your website. We realize you wouldn't typically look to economic development or entrepreneur support organizations for this type of help but that may be changing as we implement the Floyd County Economic Gardening Pilot Program.

Economic gardening represents a new way of thinking about supporting growth companies and letting business owners know how important they are to our local economies. So instead of offering traditional incentives like tax credits or real estate discounts, we're offering something that might be even more valuable to you: information — strategic information — gathered with your guidance and specifically for your company. We've observed this model in many other areas around the country and seen what kind of impressive results it produces.



Here's how it works: Partnering with the National Center for Economic Gardening, we've set up a countywide network to provide virtual access to teams of highly skilled research specialists that will be matched with a select group of qualifying companies. Using private conference calls and a secure online workspace this team will interview the company to help identify specific issues. The team devotes about 35 hours to each company over the course of a few weeks as they work quickly to deliver action-oriented information.

We emphasize the phrase "select group of qualifying companies" because this program is available only to companies that meet certain criteria — and is offered to them at no cost. As a growing company, you make a positive impact on our local economy. We want to help you make an even bigger impact. Economic gardening services are specifically designed to help growing companies make better decisions while navigating the challenges associated with growth.

Who should apply?

To be eligible for the program, participants must:

- Be a for-profit, privately-held company that has been headquartered in the county for at least the past two years.
- Generate annual revenue between about ~~\$600,000~~ ^{\$100,000} and \$1 million.
- Employ between ~~6~~ ^{1.5} and 99 full-time employees.
- Demonstrate growth in employment and/or revenue during two of the past five years.
- Provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or global markets.
- Be referred by a participating economic development or entrepreneur support organization.

What to expect

Fees: Funding for this program is by the USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program* and the Economic Development Authority of Floyd County.

Time: Accepted companies will spend 8 to 12 hours collaborating with their research team. The team, in turn, will be spending additional time behind the scenes working on your company's issues.

Potential issues: Identifying and prioritizing sales leads and business opportunities; refining your core strategies and business model; and using social media to connect with customers and create buzz about your products or services.

Logistics: You don't even have to leave your office. All communications are handled through the phone and a secure online portal where a workspace will be assigned to your company.

Hundreds of companies across the country have tested and implemented this program with outstanding results:



"I'd been involved in a business assistance program a few years ago that turned out to be just a way for consultants to find clients. Yet this was completely different — from the quality of services to its speed. The research team picked up on what we were doing really quickly and was also fast to get back to us with answers."

— Rick Mekdessie, founder of e-Gov Systems,
a developer of tax-collection software in Baton Rouge, La.

"Economic gardening is like a shot of adrenaline for a business... There are things you know you should be doing to grow, but there simply aren't enough hours in the day to get to them. The program creates structure and deadlines, and gives you resources to research some of those strategic issues."

— Mike Fox, CEO of Ingenuity IEQ,
a provider of indoor air quality solutions based in Midland, Mich.

"The process was faster than I thought, and I got more information than I expected, which has enabled me to zero in on the best opportunities. I could have spent days trolling websites looking for contacts and not getting anywhere. The team had answers for me in hours."

— Missy Rogers, president of Noble Plastics,
a custom injection-molding manufacturer in Lafayette, La.

How to get started

- 1 To ensure that you understand how the program works and if you would benefit, businesses must be referred by one of our participating organizations. To find a one in your area, call 540-745-9300.
- 2 Complete the online application. Among other things, you'll be asked to submit revenue and employment numbers for the past five years. You'll also be asked to list strategic business issues you need help with.
- 3 Someone from our organization will contact you within 24 hours.
- 4 Your application will be reviewed by the selection team.
- 5 Once accepted into the program, we'll schedule an interview between you and the research team to start the process.

Value for your time

We understand that your to-do list already has reached a mind-boggling length. This program is built to accommodate an entrepreneur's time-crunched schedule. All research specialists in the network have been trained and certified by NCEG in a process that enables them to catch up to you and your company quickly. Plus, participation in the program is completely virtual. Communications are conducted via the phone and through NCEG's online software system.

In this online portal, you'll be assigned a secure workplace to interact with the research team. Any information that you submit here is confidential and will be seen only by the research specialists assigned to your company.

For more info, contact:

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC GARDENING™

The Edward Lowe Foundation is a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through research, recognition and educational programs, which are delivered through entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs). The National Center for Economic Gardening is a partnership between the foundation and Chris Gibbons. NCEG delivers economic gardening services and maintains national standards in training and certification for both regional and statewide networks. For more info, visit www.edwardlowe.org