

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**Thursday, April 4, 2013**

**Blue Conference Room**

**1920 South Germantown Road**

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) was held Thursday, April 4, 2013, in the Blue Conference Room. Chairman Jim Stock called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Michelle East, Steven Levy, David Rea, Greg Marcom, Donald Robbins, Susan Burrow, Jim Stock, Ron Sklar Jerry Klein, Charles McCraw, Brian Pecon and John Wagner

**GUESTS:** Keith Dillihunt, Economic Development Specialist (Finance Arm of EDGE; works with PILOTS), Sharon Taylor McKinney, Economic Development Small Business Specialist from EDGE (Economic Gardening)

**ABSENT:** James King

**STAFF PRESENT:** Patrick Lawton, City Administrator; Andy Pouncey, Director of Economic and Community Development; Kathleen Rose, Interim Economic Development Consultant, Marie Burgess, Planner

A quorum for tonight's Economic Development Commission meeting was established.

### **MINUTES:**

#### **Approval of Minutes for March 4, 2013**

Chairman Jim Stock stated the first order of business is the approval of the minutes for March 4, 2013. If there were no additions, corrections or deletions to the minutes of the March 4, 2013, meeting of the Economic Development Commission, he would entertain a motion for approval.

Mr. Klein moved to approve the Economic Development Commission minutes of March 4, 2013, seconded by Mr. Pecon. **The motion was passed.**

### **REPORTS:**

a) Regional – EDGE (Keith Dillihunt, Economic Development Specialist) made a presentation. He works with companies in the PILOT program and the Finance options with EDGE. Some of you may know I was a banker here in Germantown for a number of years with First Tennessee in commercial lending. EDGE has created a financing arm for small businesses and this is not to compete with banks. It is to spur additional Economic Development. Often times you will have banks that deal with black and white rules. We needed some type of vehicle where they could operate in shades of gray, especially coming off of a recession. We have a partnership through the National Development Council which has been around since 1969.

The benefit of a SBA program is that it is more lenient. For example, commercial loan officer would do a loan for owner-occupied real estate up to about 15 years and with this SBA program we can do up to 25 years. So you can finance permanent working capital and equipment. Some of the rates are great starting at 10% for 3 years. We have fixed rates from 4.5% for 10 years. The next project we are working on is with the TN Business Development Corporation where we will be able to do 504 SBA loans and the bank will be able to do a first mortgage at 50% of the project.

EDGE has the option of coming in and financing 40% of the project and the borrower would kick in 10% of the project. This will be kicking off within the next 60 days. We are also getting our Regional fund kicked off that is geared more toward our small start up businesses, where we will do loans from about \$50,000 up to \$150,000. It is a benefit that we can do this in Memphis, Bartlett, Germantown, Collierville and all of the surrounding communities as long as they are in Shelby County. Actually, I am looking for more businesses to lend to in Memphis or Shelby County. So, we can help the small businesses in the Shelby County market. One of the deals that we are about to close right now is for an attorney. She is the only attorney in the tri-state area that handles these types of issues and she has an opportunity to grow her business. She needs to add four new attorneys, but because she has been through a

divorce and some personal credit issues a traditional bank really won't touch her at this point. We stepped in, looked at the numbers and the projections and said this is a deal that we can do with the SBA help. So we are able to provide her with a loan that will close in the next two weeks for \$125,000.

Mr. Rea asked, "How much money do you have available for a loan?"

Mr. Dillihunt answered, "I can do up to \$2 million for a single borrower."

- b) Kathleen Rose said that Germantown is working with EDGE to try to identify all the different tools that we can put in the toolbox for businesses in Germantown. That is why we met with EDGE: to learn about new finance programs like the ones Mr. Dillihunt just described. So we will have that information available. The other piece that they are involved with is through a grant with the Edward Lowe Foundation. They are doing a pilot program in the regional area called Economic Gardening. The notion is to take existing companies and help them grow. It is assistance with technology, marketing, market research if they want to roll out a new product. The Economic Gardening Program is primarily through the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team and is focused mostly on Memphis City businesses, but they do have the opportunity to reach out into the community and the county.

So, there is an opportunity for Germantown businesses to be part of and participate in it. We have a table out front called the business resource center that we created since our last meeting. We are going to start building that area as a resource center with business cards and finance information. We are going to get toolkits to help businesses understand all the tools and things that are out there. The Economic Gardening information is already out there and the SBA catalog on all the SBA programs that are available. We have now added to the City website under e-notices. There is now a box you can check for e-notifications, Economic Development and businesses. We have 25 people signed up already; we checked it today. We are going to start pushing information through a public relations strategy and we are now working on a template for a newsletter that will be digital (PDF) to keep the community and everybody informed about what is going on in Economic Development. You will be able to pull up permits, planning information to business announcements, and things that are happening in terms of programs and tools businesses can use, etc.

We sent out an internal survey that went to staff, commissioners and the Board of Mayor and Alderman. The results of that study are in your packet. The summary of that survey is that Germantown is somewhat business friendly, but has room for improvement. The other things in your packet are general information for your review: 1) Chandler Report, 2) an article from the National Association of Realtors which is called "Commercial Year of the Small Deal", which says that the next hot thing is Industrial. The secondary markets that could show strength this year include Memphis, TN.

Marie Burgess explained that one role of the EDC is to engage with our existing businesses. We have in the past encouraged members to participate in the business visits. You have a proposal for a Business Retention and Expansion program that we'd like to initiate. Staff will continue leading the business visits and this falls in line with the G.P. 3.1 of the Strategic Plan. Statistics show that 80% of job growth comes from existing businesses. The new BRE program will follow a three tier approach. 1) Large employers 50 employees and above will receive personal visits and we will invite the State to come along with us, 2) Businesses 25-49 employees will receive a personal visit, 3) Small employers/businesses that are less than 25 employees will receive a survey in the mail or email as it would take a lot of time to reach these on an annual bases. This will be a better use of our time and a way to receive feedback which we will be able to use to measure our performance. There are 900 to 1500 businesses in Germantown.

- c) Andy Pouncey stated the Western Gateway Plan is located at Poplar Pike/Poplar Avenue from the east and west of Kirby Parkway. We had shareholders representing businesses, transportation, neighborhood associations and property owners that attended these sessions. We had a design charrette with Craig Lewis from the Lawrence Group who developed Smart Growth Area Plan. It was open to the public in the Council Chambers and property owners who lived in the Poplar Estates and Nottoway attended these sessions. Mr. Lewis went over the planning process with everyone so they would understand the intent. He encouraged them to enter comments to administration. Following is the planning process for approval: 1) make changes in the codes, 2) additional neighborhood meetings, 3) go back to the Western Gateway property owners, 4) Planning Commission to review and approve the plan, 5) go to the BMA to review and approve the plan it takes about a month for this process. If that passes, then the next step is to get the

regulation plan which is like the zoning plan and code approved. You go to the Planning Commission one time and go to the BMA for three readings for approval.

Planning/Small Area Plan Districts:

- i. Central Business District – Smart Growth Area has the new Verizon building and it will open in 2 months.
- ii. Western Gateway/Poplar – McDonald’s is going to remodel their building and the parking lot for 2 drive thrus.
- iii. Eastern Gateway/Poplar -
- iv. Forest Hill Heights – The Hyatt has just been sold. The cemetery is part of Germantown and they just received a 2.1 million grant to replace the sod and reset all the stones.
- v. Wolf River – Medical district has a CIP Project currently going on. Transportation in this area is critical. We are studying the whole area and looking at alternative solutions. We talked to Baptist Rehab about repartitioning their rehab portion near Neshoba Park and the lake. Chick-Fil-A has been approved to build a new building. They purchased some land from Baptist Hospital. The Planning Commission approved Campbell Clinic for a rezoning to O-51. This will go to the BMA for three readings. C-spire was approved to go in one of the TVA towers.

d) Mr. McCraw gave a report from the Germantown Area Chamber of Commerce:

- April 25 is the Chamber Business Expo it has been changed to be called Strictly Business from 9:00-3:00.
- May’s monthly luncheon will focus on education.
- The Chamber’s website is going to be redesigned to make it more user friendly in the third quarter of this year.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

a) Ms. Rose talked about the Economic Development Work Plan Status Report see graph below. The P3 is in progress.

Mr. Rea asked Ms. Rose if she could locate any case studies on how a “Work Plan” corresponds to results.

Ms. Rose will research some case studies on Work Plans from other communities.

Germantown Economic Development Work Plan

TimeLine at a Glance

Early Action		30 Feb	90 Apr	180 Jul	STATUS	Long Term	1 2013	2 2014	3 2015	STATUS
	Complete Work Plan	X			<i>complete</i>					
	Create & Approve Department Budget		X		<i>in process</i>					
						Develop Operations Manual for Department		X		<i>in process</i>
<b>G.P. 1.1</b>	<b>Changing Perception</b>									
	Internal (staff) survey	X			<i>complete</i>	Annual Survey		X	X	
	External (citizen) survey		X		<i>in process</i>	Annual Survey		X	X	
	Press release for initiative/messaging	X			<i>complete</i>					
	Website ~ Evaluation & launch		X		<i>in process</i>	Website ~ Update & Monitor		X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
<b>G.P. 1.2</b>	<b>Development Review Process</b>									
	Modify review process per surveys		X		<i>pending</i>	Monitor Surveys to adjust process		X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
	Improve customer experience			X	<i>pending</i>					
	Review/Change planning ordinance			X	<i>in process</i>					
	Review/Change signage ordinance			X	<i>in process</i>					
<b>G.P. 1.3</b>	<b>Create Economic Development Dept.</b>									
	Create performance standards for evaluation	X			<i>in process</i>					
<b>G.P. 1.4</b>	<b>EDC/IDB Collaboration</b>									
	Review roles/purpose of EDC & IDB		X		<i>pending</i>					
	Identify areas of collaboration		X		<i>pending</i>					
<b>G.P. 2.1</b>	<b>Establish E.D. Nodes/Districts</b>									
	Identify boundaries of each node	X			<i>complete</i>					
	Inventory Parcels within each node		X		<i>complete</i>					
	Create scope of RFP for SAP			X	<i>pending</i>					
	Completed SAP for each district			X	<i>in process</i>	Completed SAP for each district	X	X		<i>in process</i>
<b>G.P. 2.2</b>	<b>Create Zoning for each District</b>									
	Review ordinance and modify as determined			X	<i>in process</i>	New zoning for each district	X			<i>in process</i>
<b>G.P. 2.3</b>	<b>Property Offering Program</b>									
	Inventory land and buildings			X	<i>pending</i>	Adminster/Process applications	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
	Publish map of inventory - website			X	<i>pending</i>	Update map and create offering pkgs	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
<b>G.P. 3.1</b>	<b>Business Retention/Expansion (BRE)</b>									
	Determine BRE programs in existence	X			<i>complete</i>	TNEDC/EDGE engagement	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
	Establish BRE program		X		<i>complete</i>	Monitor BRE program	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
<b>G.P. 3.2</b>	<b>Live/Work Initiative</b>									
	Create Annual Business & Industry Summit			X	<i>in process</i>	Hold Annual Summit	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
	Connect with SCORE & SBA			X	<i>complete</i>	SBA/SCORE engagement	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
	Facilitate internship/apprentice opportunities			X	<i>pending</i>	Internship/Apprentice opportunities	X	X	X	<i>ongoing</i>
<b>G.P. 3.3</b>	<b>Tourism Expansion</b>									
	Inventory assets & create map		X		<i>pending</i>					
	Create & promote packages		X		<i>pending</i>					
	Collaborate with hotels & tourism organizations			X	<i>pending</i>	Ongoing collaboration & promotion	X	X	X	

Early Action	30	90	180	STATUS		1	2	3	STATUS
	Feb	Apr	Jul			2013	2014	2015	
<b>G.P. 3.4</b>	<b>Connect Tourism &amp; Charity</b>								
		X		complete					
			X	pending					
<b>G.P. 3.5</b>	<b>Retail Revitalization</b>								
		X		pending					
			X	pending					
			X	pending	Monitoring retail health of centers	X	X	X	ongoing
			X	pending					
<b>G.P. 3.6</b>	<b>Program events in retail centers</b>								
		X		pending					
			X	pending					
			X	in process					
<b>G.P. 4.1</b>	<b>Communication &amp; Marketing Campaign</b>								
		X		in process					
			X	pending	Monitor effectiveness of marketing efforts	X	X	X	ongoing
<b>G.P. 4.2</b>	<b>Social Media Campaign</b>								
			X	pending	Monitor & track Social Media	X	X	X	ongoing
<b>G.P. 4.3</b>	<b>Conventions, Meetings &amp; the Great Hall</b>								
			X	pending					
			X	pending	RFP for the Great Hall	X			pending
<b>G.P. 4.4</b>	<b>Private roundtable forum: Leaders &amp; Elected</b>								
					Annual Roundtable coincident with Summit	X	X	X	in process
			X	in process					
<b>G.P. 4.5</b>	<b>Lifelong Learning &amp; Incubation</b>								
			X	pending	Part of annual Summit	X	X	X	ongoing
					Schools & Large Employer Partnerships	X	X	X	
					Re-evaluate Medical Incubation Initiative	X			in process
<b>G.P. 5.1</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>								
		X		pending					
		X		in process					
<b>G.P. 5.2</b>	<b>Performance Reporting</b>								
					Create an annual Trends Report (Summit)	X	X	X	in process
					Create a public Dashboard for transparency	X			pending

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- a) Task Forces
  - i. Retail
  - ii. Tourism
  - iii. Innovation

Ms. Burgess noted we would like everyone to sign up for a task Force tonight. We also want the community to get involved in the Task Forces. We are thinking about the first meeting being in June and making them monthly meetings for a while until things become established.

Sharon Taylor McKinney, Economic Development Small Business Specialist with EDGE made a presentation. We are doing a PILOT program in the region called Economic Gardening. The notion is to take existing companies and help them grow. We are the solution in Economic Development for the small businesses: the ones that are too small to be large and too big to be small. They are caught in the middle and don't have the help they really need to really grow their business. So we have created a program working in conjunction with communities and the Edward Lowe Foundation called Economic Gardening. It is a new trend going on across the country, where communities are looking at other options to grow their economics. In place of your Economic Development hunting and traditional type programs, this is another tool we can add in the toolbox, where we can help those businesses that are primarily between 1 million to 50 million. They may need help with growing from the standpoint of markets and strategy. We do Economic Gardening according to the Edward Lowe Foundation. We take a company, put that CEO in the center, and surround that CEO with excellent staff and consultants' staff that can provide them with the help that they need. There are normally about three types of professionals that are on that team for that CEO, there is a strategy development person, market research person that comes in and provides the research, GIS person that comes in and provides the technical mapping support and then an SEO person that comes in and helps them do a search engine. It is assistance with technology marketing; market research if they want to roll out a new product. The Economic Gardening Program is primarily through the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team and it is focused mostly on Memphis City businesses but they do have the opportunity to reach out into the community and the county.

We need your support in identifying and recommending local companies in your area that may qualify to participate in the Memphis and Shelby County Economic Gardening trial program. In this new program trial, we will provide 22 local firms with free access to marketing and management experts trained at helping small companies find new opportunities to grow. Of those firms, six slots have been funded to offer businesses that are domiciled in suburban Shelby County municipalities an opportunity to participate.

Based on Economic Gardening, this program strategy was founded in Littleton, Colorado in 1987 to combat a statewide recession. Since implementing the program, Littleton has experienced a 71 percent increase in employment.

Littleton's success has been duplicated throughout the country in states like Florida, Georgia, Michigan and Texas. In Florida alone, 250 Economic Gardening participants generated an estimated \$510 million in economic output while creating 3,285 jobs.

It is our pleasure to invite businesses in your community to participate in the Memphis and Shelby County Economic Gardening trial program designed to accelerate the growth of participating firms. We will select 6 firms located in suburban Shelby County municipalities to participate in a trial program, at no cost. Ideally, we would like to award one company from each suburban city if possible.

This new economic development program will provide high-level support, using strategic research teams for companies like yours that have proven business models, an intent and capacity for growth, and plans to serve external markets outside of Memphis and Shelby County.

The Memphis and Shelby County Economic Gardening trial program will assist local companies with market research, strategy and management, geographical information systems, and new media. EDGE and the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team have contracted with the Edward Lowe Foundation (Cassopolis, MI) to provide these services. If the program is as successful as anticipated, it will be implemented on a permanent basis.

To be considered for selection, local companies must meet the following criteria:

- Have revenues of \$1 million to \$50 million and have 10-99 employees
- CEO/Owner must make a commitment to personally participate and allocate 10-20

hours for the program preparations, team and administration contact in a virtual (web-based) environment.

- Willingness to implement the identified or adapted growth strategy.
- Readiness to join the first Memphis and Shelby County Economic Gardening CEO Roundtable upon graduation from the Economic Gardening trail program for periodic follow-up, networking meetings at 3 months, 6 months during the first year, and then annually thereafter over a three- year period.
- And submit a completed application to: Economic Gardening Program either by U.S. Postal Service or in person at the Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE) office located at 100 Peabody Place, Suite 1100, Memphis, Tennessee, 38103. Thereafter, the application period will remain open until all 22 companies are selected.

***Enclosed is a fact sheet describing Economic Gardening. Should you have questions or need additional information, please e-mail Sharon Taylor McKinney at 901-341-2118 or via email at [STMckinney@growth-engine.org](mailto:STMckinney@growth-engine.org).***



## What's Economic Gardening?

Economic Gardening® represents a new way of thinking about supporting growth companies and letting business owners know how important they are to their 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 CEOs: information — strategic information — gathered with their guidance and customized for their company.

In contrast to traditional business assistance focused on finances, business plans and operational issues, Economic Gardening addresses strategic growth challenges such as developing new markets, refining business models and gaining access to competitive intelligence. To do this, teams of highly skilled research specialists mine sophisticated databases and leverage a number of high-end tools related to search engine optimization, social media marketing and geographic information systems.

Here's how our model works: Partnering with the National Center for Economic Gardening (NCEG), we've set up a regional network to provide virtual access to research teams that are assigned to a select group of qualifying



companies. Using private conference calls and a secure online workspace, the teams will interview the companies to identify their specific growth issues. The team devotes about 36 hours to each company over the course of a few weeks as they work quickly to deliver action-oriented information.

“Economic Gardening specialists enable CEOs to identify opportunities they may not be aware of and point them to new tools and information to apply immediately — which is why it's ideal for second-stage companies,” says NCEG founder Chris Gibbons.

## Targeting second-stagers

Second-stage companies (growth-oriented companies that have moved beyond the startup phase) play a critical role in job creation and vibrant economies. Indeed, between 1995 and 2009, second-stage companies represented about 11 percent of U.S. resident establishments, but generated more than 36 percent of jobs and 38 percent of sales, according to YourEconomy.org

Although funding and resources exist for small businesses and startups, second-stage entrepreneurs have different needs to continue growing — needs that Economic Gardening programs are specifically designed to zero in on.

## For more info, contact:

Sharon Taylor McKinney  
Email: [STMckinney@growth-engine.org](mailto:STMckinney@growth-engine.org)  
Dorian Spears  
Email: [dorian.spears@memphistn.gov](mailto:dorian.spears@memphistn.gov)  
Ph: 901-341-2118

**EDGE**



## Who should you refer?

To be eligible for the EDGE Economic Gardening Pilot Program, participants must:

- 1 Be a for-profit, privately-held company that has been headquartered in Memphis or Shelby counties for at least the past two years.
- 2 Generate annual revenue between \$1 million and \$50 million.
- 3 Employ between 10 and 99 full-time employees.
- 4 Demonstrate growth in employment and/or revenue during two of the past five years.
- 5 Provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or international markets.
- 6 Be referred by a participating network organization.



## The role of entrepreneur support organizations



Entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs) play an important role in the network's success by identifying eligible second-stage companies and referring them to the program. ESOs can include chambers of commerce, universities, small business development centers, technology councils and economic-development agencies. The common denominator: they're all working to accelerate the success of local entrepreneurs.

ESOs also help by educating companies about Economic Gardening services, setting appropriate expectations and following up with them afterward. There are typically no initial costs for second-stage participants. As funding for networks varies from region to region, ESO partner organizations may be asked to contribute a small amount. Contact your host organization for more details.

## Benefits for ESO partners

**Build trust.** Referring local companies into an Economic Gardening program helps ESOs build trust because they're introducing clients to services they can't get anywhere else.

In fact, Tammie Nemecek, director of partner development at the Florida Economic Gardening Institute and former CEO of the Economic Development Council of Collier County, says that economic gardening "dramatically changes how entrepreneurs look at ESOs." Both because economic gardening helps existing, smaller companies and because entrepreneurs see benefits within a few hours, ESOs take on a higher profile and become more meaningful, she explains. "Entrepreneurs turn into advocates for the ESO and become a very vocal group that can drive positive change in a community."

**Increase effectiveness.** ESOs that participate in an Economic Gardening network learn more about each other, which enables groups to avoid duplication of services, refine their core strengths and refer clients to other groups when appropriate.

**Strengthen culture.** Economic Gardening helps establish an entrepreneurial culture within communities that is critical to regional growth. Local businesses tend to have greater commitment to their regions and the most impact on sustainable job creation than companies with out-of-state headquarters. If they grow, the whole community benefits.

*"There has to be trust between entrepreneurs and the ESOs referring them into an Economic Gardening network.... Entrepreneurs need to know ESOs can truly support them, and Economic Gardening proves that you know what their needs are and can deliver on helping them."*

— Tammie Nemecek,  
director of partner development  
at the Florida Economic Gardening Institute

*"Economic Gardening gives us another way to help businesses — and it enables us to focus on second-stagers, which we weren't doing before. Previously we were working with either startups or large companies. Now we're able to concentrate on the middle market."*

— Nicole Whitehead, manager of sales operations  
at the Michigan Economic Development Corp.

*"Having access to NCEG's national research team was a tremendous asset. We launched our program just six months after learning about Economic Gardening, and there was no way we could have built our own team of research specialists. The professionalism and expertise of NCEG's team far exceeded our expectations."*

— David Bennett, business development officer  
at Louisiana Economic Development

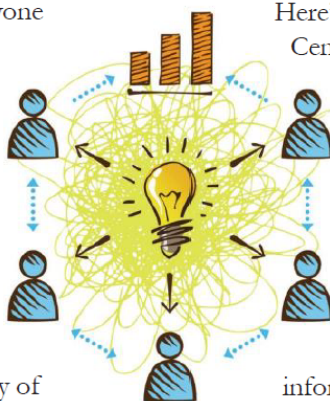


The Edward Lowe Foundation is a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through research, recognition and educational programs, which are delivered through entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs). The National Center for Economic Gardening is a partnership between the foundation and Chris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

# 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 EDGE 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 regional 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 36 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 Memphis or Shelby counties for at least the past two years.
- Generate annual revenue or working capital of between \$1 million and \$50 million.
- Employ between 10 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:** Costs are covered by regional or state organizations who have pooled funds to support this program.

**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 901-341-2103.
- 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:

Sharon Taylor McKinney  
Email: STMckinney@growth-engine.org  
Dorian Spears  
Email: dorian.spears@memphistn.gov  
Ph: 901-341-2118



### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be May 2, 2013.