

# York offering educational help for retailers, home-based businesses



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**Y**ork County wants to help local retailers survive by offering scholarships for business training that would be coordinated by the Retail Alliance in Hampton Roads.

The alliance's Center for Retail Excellence plans to start a series of classes at the York County Chamber of Commerce office in January. The county is accepting applications from participants to cover half class cost.

"You might open a hardware store because you know a lot about nuts and bolts; that doesn't mean you understand the nuts and bolts of running a business," said Susan Moore, director of the Center for Retail Excellence. "We don't want you to discover how important those skills are by your business failing. We want you to succeed long-term."

The scholarship can go toward a 42-week, \$995 course in which a participant earns a certificate of retail operations, or toward individual six-week classes that cost \$165 each, according to a county news release.

The certificate course educates participants on how to start a retail business, and participants finish the course with a vetted business plan. Classwork is done both online and in the classroom, where participants learn directly from experts and can share their experiences with other students.

Participants must either live in York County or have a county business license. The classes are held at 4102 George Washington Memorial Highway. For more info, visit [www.retailalliance.com](http://www.retailalliance.com).

Peninsula home-based businesses or folks who work from home can also learn more about resources and education for home-based businesses at the Home-Based Business 2018 Lunch & Learn Series Wrap-Up, noon to 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 12 at the Victory Family YMCA.

The York-led effort will announce new partners like Newport News and the Victory YMCA, said Melissa Davidson, assistant director of York's economic development office. Newport News plans to join the Williamsburg area in hosting lunch-and-learns next year, she said.

Why come to these events? "It's an opportunity not only to learn new tips and strategies specific to home-based businesses but also to meet others who are in the same boat as you and learn from each other and support each other," Davidson said.

The YMCA is offering childcare for ages 6 months to 5 years during the event, which includes lunch. R.S.V.P. by Dec. 5 at [econdev@yorkcounty.gov](mailto:econdev@yorkcounty.gov) or [hbbholidayparty.eventbrite.com](http://hbbholidayparty.eventbrite.com).

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