

New Business Assistance Information

Starting a new business can be a bit daunting: finding a commercial location, navigating the local and state approval processes, setting up the legal, accounting, and marketing details of the business, determining the best way to finance your new enterprise, hiring and training employees, and much more. You know your business and idea inside and out, but the other steps and details involved in bringing your dream to reality can be overwhelming.

From the initial stages of your start-up to the growth and expansion of your business, the York County Office of Economic Development (OED) is here to help. We offer many services and marketing options for new York County businesses, each of which is detailed below. Contact us today. We look forward to assisting with your new venture!

Site Selection

York County OED Staff is available to help you find the ideal site or building for your business. Contact us today. Staff has access to the CoStar Commercial Real Estate Database and can provide detailed demographic and consumer expenditure reports, as well as detailed maps with data overlays.

Keep It In York County

The **Keep It In York County** campaign aims to educate local residents about the direct benefits to them of buying local, namely lower taxes and increased choices and services, and to encourage them to do so whenever possible. It also serves as a free online marketing tool for York's existing businesses.

The main component of the campaign is an interactive website that features a free, searchable, online database of all of York County's existing commercially-based businesses. It includes a basic listing (including business name, physical address, phone number, and web address); however, businesses are encouraged to enhance their listing for free with photos, logos, coupons, events, descriptions, tag lines, and more. The site also hosts a community calendar to help promote local events, sales, and specials, a feature meant to keep visitors periodically checking back to the site.

Visit www.KeepItInYorkCounty.com today!

Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting Assistance

York County offers new businesses an array of assistance options for Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting ceremonies. Staff can schedule a speaker for the event from our local Board of Supervisors and/or Chambers of Commerce. The ceremonial ribbon and over-sized scissors are also provided. If needed, staff will attend the event, take photos, and draft a media announcement to be sent to the local press on your behalf. All grand opening announcements will also be posted on the Economic Development website and in the County's quarterly newspaper, Citizen News, which reaches over 21,000 households.

A detailed Grand Opening Guide is available online at www.YesYorkCounty.com.

Once the event date is set, contact the Office of Economic Development to schedule speakers and take advantage of this free promotion of your new business. Email econdev@yorkcounty.gov or call 757-890-3317 today.

Financial Assistance Programs

Home-based Business Transition Grants

The purpose of this program is to encourage the growth and success of home-based businesses located in York County by assisting them in the transition to a commercial location. Matching grant funds, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per business, can be awarded for such uses as:

- Purchase of supplies, equipment, or inventory;
- Down payment toward the lease or purchase of commercial property;
- Renovations or upgrades to a commercial location;
- Marketing and promotion; or
- Inventory and supplies.

NxLevel Scholarship Program

The NxLevel Course is a 12-session national training program that helps entrepreneurs learn the skills needed to create and strengthen successful business ventures. To any York County business owner or citizen wanting to start a business who successfully completes this course, the York County Economic Development Authority offers 50% matching scholarships up to \$300. Businesses must apply in advance of starting the course.

E-Commerce Grant Program

The E-Commerce Grant Program was developed to encourage York County businesses to create or enhance their online presence, a necessary step in today's business environment. Fifty percent matching grants, up to \$500 per business, or \$1,000 for minority and women-owned businesses, are awarded for the design of a new or upgraded website.

EDA Incentives

York County offers a variety of loans, grants, and land discounts to businesses in target industries such as defense contracting, software development, engineering, architectural services, and more. Target factors, among others, include environmentally friendly projects, business expansion and redevelopment of blighted property. Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility and funding levels.

Publicity/Marketing Assistance

In an effort to help promote our businesses and provide them with as much free publicity as possible, all new business license recipients are listed on the Office of Economic Development website, in the Office of Economic Development's E-Newsletter, and on the County's buy local website www.KeepItInYorkCounty.com. If a grand opening or ribbon cutting ceremony is held, an announcement about the event will be placed in the County's quarterly newspaper, Citizen News, and on the Office of Economic Development's website in the news section.

The Office of Economic Development also provides a marketing idea sheet, available at www.YesYorkCounty.com, which gives business owners ideas for further promoting their business.

Education Seminars

Throughout the year, the Office of Economic Development, as well as various partner organizations, hosts several educational series and seminars for local business owners. An array of topics are covered, from marketing to finances, and far beyond. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.YesYorkCounty.com to sign up for the Office of Economic Development's Monthly E-Newsletter.

Networking Opportunities & Social Events

The Office of Economic Development hosts several networking and social events for businesses throughout the year. Annual events, such as our Business Appreciation Reception and Snowflake Soiree, honor and recognize local businesses for their contributions to our community and provide excellent networking opportunities for attendees. To learn more about these events and others, visit www.YesYorkCounty.com to sign up for the Office of Economic Development's Monthly E-Newsletter.

Business Assistance Information and Referrals

OED staff is available to all new and existing businesses to assist with any of the following:

- Real estate and business-partnering opportunities
- Information about local, state, and federal assistance programs, permitting, and regulatory requirements
- Workforce training and development needs
- Grant and incentive award program information
- Current demographic, consumer-spending, and traffic data
- Networking opportunities and educational workshops

In many cases, an outside or partner agency is better-equipped to meet the specific needs of a local business. In those cases, OED staff provides specific referrals to the appropriate person and agency that can best meet their needs.