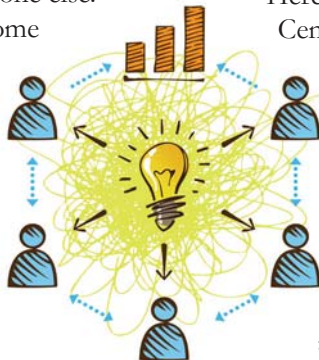


Better information, better decisions — and a better way to help your company!

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 with our Pure Michigan Business Connect economic gardening network.

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 the results tell us it's time to bring it to Michigan!



Here's how it works: Partnering with the National Center for Economic Gardening, we are using our regional networks 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 headquartered in the region for at least the past two years.
- Generate annual revenue of between \$750,000 and \$50 million.
- Employ between 6 and 99 full-time employees.
- Demonstrate growth in employment and/or revenue during two of the past five years.
- Have potential revenue growth in the next three years that exceeds \$1 million.
- Provide products or services beyond the local area to regional, national or global markets.
- Be referred by a local MEDC partner, business development manager or an entrepreneur support organization.

What to expect

Fees: Costs are covered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

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 U.S. companies have gotten outstanding results, and now Michigan companies are experiencing it:



“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.

“We are overhauling our website as a result of the suggestions from the economic gardening team, and we now have a much larger audience of qualified leads to target. In addition, the way we will go about reaching our target market is much improved as we prepare to launch a new product which we feel has the potential to bring transformative value to our customers and our organization.”

— Joseph A. Johnson, vice president of business development at DNA Software Inc.,
a simulation and diagnostic software company in Ann Arbor, Mich.

How to get started

Participating companies are nominated on a regional basis through referrals from MEDC’s local economic development partners, business development managers or entrepreneur support organizations. Once notified of your nomination, you will follow these steps:

- 1 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.
- 2 Your application will be reviewed to confirm eligibility, and someone from the program team will contact you within 24 hours.
- 3 Once accepted into the program, we’ll start the processing by scheduling an initial interview between you and the research team’s leader. The interview is done by phone and generally lasts 60 minutes.
- 4 The interview will be followed by a scheduled conference call with the full research team to discuss business issues in detail. This conference call generally lasts 60 minutes.

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:

Your local economic development agency,
MEDC business development manager or:

Customer Assistance
Michigan Economic Development Corp.
Ph: 517-373-9808
Email: medcservices@michigan.org

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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