



# The IEDC Economic Development Journal

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## The Forgotten Sector

*By Melissa Davidson*

### FOCUSING ON HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

Economic development is traditionally focused on business attraction and retention of brick-and-mortar companies. This focus is beginning to shift as industry professionals see the number of entrepreneurial and home-based businesses growing, due to technological advances, rising overhead costs, and changes in family structures and work-life-balance desires of today's workers. Many experts agree that home-based businesses are the way of the future for much of the world-wide workforce. As this lifestyle becomes more mainstream, programs such as York County, Virginia's Home-Based Business Assistance Program, a recipient of IEDC's 2017 Excellence in Economic Development Gold Award, must emerge to meet the unique needs of this sector and to complement a community's retention and attraction strategies.

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# the forgotten sector

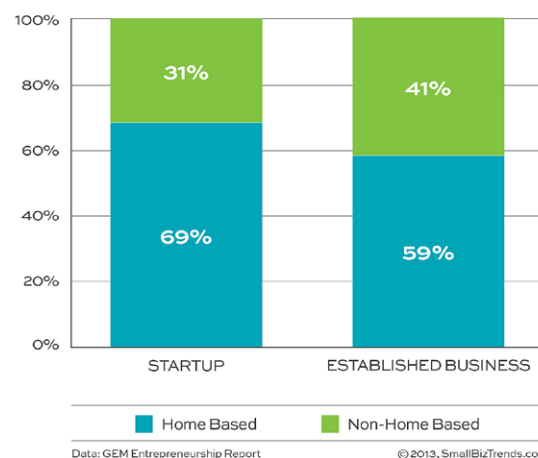
By Melissa Davidson

Economic development is traditionally focused on new business attraction and the retention of existing brick-and-mortar companies. This focus, however, is beginning to shift as industry professionals see the growing trends of entrepreneurial startups and home-based businesses taking place locally and world-wide. Advances in technology, rising costs of doing business, changes in family structures and needs, and changes in the work-life balance desires of today's workers are fueling this trend. Many experts now agree that home-based businesses are the way of the future for much of the American and world-wide workforce. As this lifestyle becomes more mainstream, new programs must emerge to meet the needs of this business sector.

## WHY DOES HOME "WORK"?

Did you know that 52 percent of all small businesses are home-based?<sup>1</sup> According to Business-for-Home.org, in 2012 there were over 38 million home-based businesses in the United States (including direct/network marketing representatives), and they make up more than half of all new businesses annually. At that time, home-based businesses were generating \$427 billion in annual revenue and creating one new job every 11 seconds.<sup>2</sup> According to the 2012 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report, 69 percent of all businesses are started from home and 59 percent are still operating from their homes three years later. Additionally, "only one-fourth of the entrepreneurs surveyed stated they had no employees working for their businesses. Given the high prevalence of entrepreneurs operating at home (two-thirds of Total Entrepreneurial Activity), this finding suggests that

CHART 1. HOME-BASED BUSINESSES IN U.S.



So why does working from home seem to work for so many? It's all about balance.

many actually had employees in their home-based businesses."<sup>3</sup> (Chart 1)

Fifty percent of the U.S. workforce has a job that is compatible with at least partial telework and approximately 20-25 percent of the workforce does take advantage of teleworking opportunities with some frequency, according to research by the Telework Research Network.<sup>4</sup> "An estimated three million American professionals never step foot in an office outside of their own home."<sup>5</sup>

So why does working from home seem to work for so many? It's all about balance. According to Telework Research Network, about 90 percent of home-based workers say they are happier with the work/life balance provided by their work-from-home situations, even though they tend to work harder and longer. In addition, 79 percent say they

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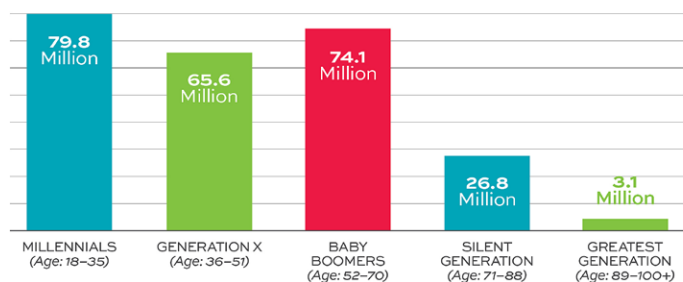
## FOCUSING ON HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

Economic development is traditionally focused on business attraction and retention of brick-and-mortar companies. This focus is beginning to shift as industry professionals see the number of entrepreneurial and home-based businesses growing, due to technological advances, rising overhead costs, and changes in family structures and work-life-balance desires of today's workers. Many experts agree that home-based businesses are the way of the future for much of the world-wide workforce. As this lifestyle becomes more mainstream, programs such as York County, Virginia's Home-Based Business Assistance Program, a recipient of IEDC's 2017 Excellence in Economic Development Gold Award, must emerge to meet the unique needs of this sector and to complement a community's retention and attraction strategies.

would like to work from home at least part of the time. Home-based workers are able to make more efficient and productive use of their time by continuing to work when they're sick, returning to work more quickly following surgeries or other major life events, and handling personal appointments and commitments, without losing a full day of work.<sup>6</sup>

Parents with young children find that working from home gives them more time with their families and more money in their bank accounts, while also allowing them to still balance a career. Workers in the "Sandwich Generation", responsible for both their aging parents and their own children, find caring for loved ones to be easier and less expensive when they can work from home. Millennials have a strong desire to be independent and work for themselves. They want to choose their location and "place" versus being tied down to a job at one location. The United States population consists of a combined total of 219.5 million people in these three generations – the Millennials, Generation X, and the Baby Boomers – so the work from home lifestyle is likely to become increasingly prevalent and widely-accepted as the need increases for more flexible time management. (Chart 2)

**CHART 2. ADULT GENERATIONS BY POPULATION SIZE, 2016**



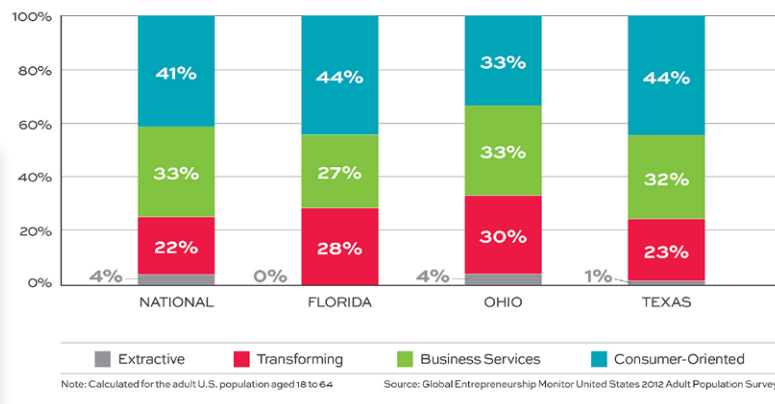
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Beyond just helping to balance family and social obligations, working from home also helps Americans balance their bank accounts. Telework estimates that Americans working from home, even just half the time, would each save an average of \$2,000 - \$7,000 a year. This is in addition to the company's savings on real estate, electricity, absenteeism, turnover and productivity, which averages over \$11,000 a year per employee empowered to work from home.<sup>7</sup> With so many home-based businesses employing other home-based workers, the savings can really add up.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Who are these home-based business owners and why did they choose to operate from home? One might incorrectly assume that the majority of home-based businesses are network or direct marketing in nature, not requiring much assistance and not making a large impact on the local economy. The reality is that home-based businesses are comprised of many different types of businesses, from traditional, to franchises, to entrepreneurs, to direct and network marketers, each of which makes a huge impact, when tended to properly. In fact, only 33 percent of home-based businesses fall into the typical industries thought of as being ideal as home-based: freelancing, independent contracting, consulting, and virtual assistance. A whopping 41 percent are actually in the consumer sector, which could include everything from hotels and restaurants, to real estate or online eCommerce shops.<sup>8</sup> (Chart 3)

**CHART 3. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY (TEA) ACROSS INDUSTRY SECTORS FOR THREE STATES AND NATIONAL, GEM U.S. 2012**



Demographics play a key role in the types of home-based businesses that exist in a community. For example, one can presume that communities with aging populations may find more contractors who are retired service members or former company executives, whereas college towns may find more risk-taking entrepreneur-types. Areas with a more middle-aged demographic may find they have a high concentration of direct and network marketing businesses, owned by stay-at-home parents who want to have more time with their small children, while still contributing to the family's income.

The types of home-based businesses in a community also depend greatly on the community type itself. For example, rural communities, with limited broadband access, may see more agricultural businesses, while urban communities, with adequate high-speed internet and nearby colleges, may find more technology entrepreneurs.

Another determining factor is the proximity to various community assets, such as research labs, airports, universities, etc. For example, an area with several military bases will likely find that they have many government contractors working from home. They will also find that many military spouses, who are often forced to be tran-

Advances in technology allow more and more people to work from home each day. At the same time, rising costs of doing business commercially deter many entrepreneurs from taking a leap in that direction. Between changes in family structures and needs, to changes in the work-life balance desires of today's workers, many things are driving this desire to work from home. With more people choosing the home-based business lifestyle now than ever before, is anyone helping them grow and succeed?

sient in nature, operate home-based businesses, because they are mobile and can be moved from place to place when service station changes are required. Agricultural communities may find there are many home-grown ventures in their areas, such as artisans and craft food makers. University towns may find scientists and researchers who are also patent-holders and entrepreneurs building businesses on their findings. Additionally, most communities will find that they have many more traditional home-based businesses than they ever imagined, such as construction companies, cleaning services, graphic designers, accountants, and consultants. For many small business owners, being home just works better. But why?

### SURVIVAL OF THE LEANEST

The increasing trend to “come home” was partly fueled by the Great Recession. Far fewer entrepreneurs started new ventures in the years that followed, and the ones who did were “Necessity Entrepreneurs, who needed to ‘create their own jobs.’”<sup>9</sup> Many existing small business owners, who simply could no longer keep up with the overhead of running a commercially-located business, brought their businesses home in order to survive. Cutting costs was the only way to keep their companies alive in an ever shrinking economy.

Company layoffs and military base realignments and closures, under the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, caused many employees and former service members to rethink their futures and career goals. Would they continue searching for a new job in the rat race of a now even more competitive environment? Or would they start their own business from home? The savings were clear for many: lower household expenses, such as gas and childcare, plus the added tax benefits of being able to claim the home office deduction.

Many chose to work with direct sales companies for extra income, while on the hunt for a full time position. Others chose to

take the entrepreneurial route and start a business online, thus keeping their business and household overhead low. Still others chose to take advantage of outsourcing trends in government purchasing by becoming contractors in their former areas of expertise, sometimes being awarded contracts at the same place from which they were laid off. As damaging as the effects of the Great Recession were, many opportunities were also born from it, for those poised and ready to seize them.

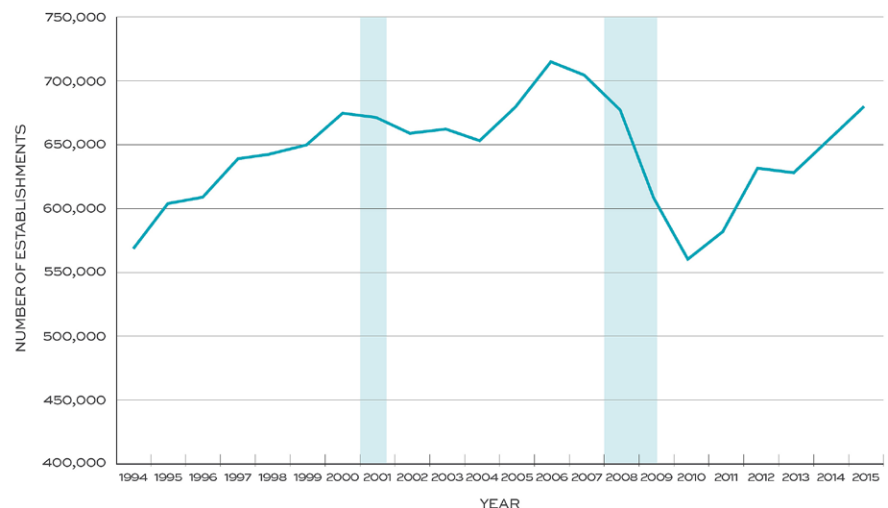
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### SHIFTING THE FOCUS

Economic development, for many communities, can no longer be all about landing the big one, if we want to play in today's global and technology-driven economy. We must adapt our strategies to the changing business climate. What does that mean? We must, at least partially, shift our focus to the fast-growing sectors of entrepreneurs and home-based businesses. Home-based business assistance programs help build relationships with businesses that are not yet “on the radar.”

The Kauffman Indexes of Startup Activity, Growth Entrepreneurship, and Main Street Activity Entrepreneurship all have been rising steadily since 2014.<sup>10</sup> The Labor Department reports that “new business ‘births’ now significantly outpace business ‘deaths,’ a positive trend that has accelerated since late 2013.”<sup>11</sup> There are over 650,000 new businesses every year. (Chart 4) With over 60 percent of them starting as home-based, the need for establishing programs, tax benefits, and other assistance initiatives for them is clear. These programs are important

**CHART 4. NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS LESS THAN 1 YEAR OLD, MARCH 1994 – MARCH 2015**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Several challenges can exist when developing a program to meet the needs of the home-based business community. Because it can be difficult to show an immediate or accurate return on investment, it is essential to get elected officials on board before program implementation. When armed with data on the makeup of home-based businesses in the community, it's hard to refute the need for developing assistance programs.

business retention and expansion tools that are essential for meeting the unique needs of this part of a local business community. In the future, when these companies are in growth mode, they now have established relationships with and loyalties to their current community.

### STARTUP CHALLENGES

Several challenges can exist when developing a program to meet the needs of the home-based business community. Because it can be difficult to show an immediate or accurate return on investment, it is essential to get elected officials on board before program implementation. When armed with data on the makeup of home-based businesses in the community, it's hard to refute the need for developing assistance programs.

Many communities have either nonexistent or antiquated ordinances concerning home-based businesses. It is difficult to justify creating an assistance program for this sector without first reviewing and updating such ordinances to create a more business-friendly environment. This can sometimes be a more involved and time-consuming process than anticipated, so careful planning is necessary. It is also imperative that members of the review team include home-based business owners in the community, who can give real-world feedback on the pros and cons of the current ordinance as it affects their business.

Funding for the creation of a home-based business assistance program can sometimes be a challenge, however, if done progressively, almost any community can afford to implement some level of help. If funding is a concern, communities can start small, adding a few seminars or networking events per year, or partnering with other business organizations to provide tangible benefits to small business owners. Creative funding solutions can be used to develop a successful program. For example, sponsors can be obtained for events and public and private community development grants can be explored for the program components.

Once the internal challenges have been overcome, the next step is to determine exactly what needs exist and to develop programs that address them.

### MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE FORGOTTEN SECTOR

The economic development community should rally around home-based business owners and develop programs that will help them grow. The first step in this process is to determine the composition of the home-based business community. A great place to start is by forming a partnership with the locality's Commissioner of Revenue or Business License Office. There, a detailed list of registered home-based businesses can often be obtained, many times with corresponding data on the type of business and their contact information. The level of data available will vary by locality, as some commissioners may consider this to be private information. Chambers of Commerce and other networking groups are also valuable resources for reaching home-based business owners and learning more about them.

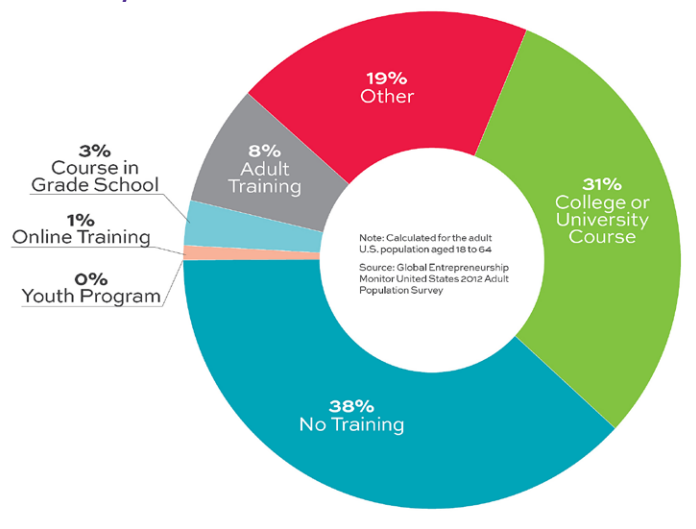
Once the makeup of the home-based business sector is determined, economic development professionals must think like home-based business owners. The best way to understand them is to reach out and talk to local business owners to get their feedback, ideas, and unique needs. Considerations could include ideal timing for events, suggested topics for educational seminars, childcare needs, budgetary concerns, and the types of assistance needed (i.e. grants, loans, educational seminars, networking events, resource fairs, job fairs, roundtables with elected officials, vendor fairs, etc.).

Economic developers traditionally assume that grants or loans are the most helpful thing to a growing business. While this may be true of a start-up home-based business or an owner who is ready to make the move to commercial space, it is not always true for more established owners. Most operate from home for a reason and do not have plans to transition to another space at this time. Also, most have surpassed the three year "make it or break it" mark, the point at which a business owner decides whether to continue the venture or close.

Many home-based business owners find themselves cooped up inside all day, so networking opportunities may be more valuable to them than monetary assistance.

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**CHART 5. SOURCE OF TRAINING IN STARTING A BUSINESS FOR TOTAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY IN THE U.S., 2012**



Marketing programs may be a meaningful way to assist them, as marketing dollars are typically smaller and tend to be cut first from tight budgets. Educational opportunities that are specific to their situations and concerns, rather than to the concerns of brick and mortar operations, may also be more valuable than monetary assistance. Confirming this finding is data in the 2012 GEM Entrepreneurship Report that states the following:

“Thirty-eight percent (38%) of entrepreneurs reported that they received no formal entrepreneurship training. Furthermore, online training was rarely mentioned. To the extent that training can improve one’s skills and perceptions about entrepreneurship, it is not unreasonable to assume that *training can inspire people* to be entrepreneurs at some point in their careers, perhaps when needed or when they see a promising opportunity. *Training may also enhance their chances of success and their ability to expand their ventures. These findings evoke questions about the availability of entrepreneurship training in the United States and reveal opportunities to enhance such services in this country.*” (Chart 5)

Many home-based business owners have competing obligations, such as small children and/or elderly parents to care for, as well as various philanthropic pursuits. Timing is key. For example, a lunch program may work best, so as not to conflict with morning or evening family obligations. Programs that offer a childcare option may be popular with work-from-home parents. Seminar topics regarding work-life balance or home office tax deductions might be of interest. Among entrepreneurs, 72 percent of women operate at home, versus 61 percent of men.<sup>12</sup> Planning social and networking events that many women business owners would enjoy could increase attendance and participation.

Programs designed for this sector must take these many unique needs into consideration if they are to be successes. An implementation success story can be found in the small community of York County, Virginia.

## A CASE STUDY: YORK COUNTY, VIRGINIA’S HOME-BASED BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

York County is a semi-rural coastal community in Southeastern Virginia consisting of approximately 68,000 citizens and a business community over 4,500 strong. York County’s location is unique, in that it is in proximity to nine military installations, with a combined total of over 8,000 exiting service members each year. The region is home to 12 institutes of higher education, numerous technical schools, and several federal labs and research facilities, such as the National Institute of Aerospace, Jefferson Labs, NASA Langley, and the Virginia Modeling, Analysis, and Simulation Center.<sup>13</sup>

In 2011, York County’s economic development staff noticed that two-thirds of the county’s business licenses were from home-based businesses. Staff was shocked that nearly 66 percent of the existing business base was not the traditional brick and mortar business that most of their programs were designed to assist. Staff then began to research further the composition of these home-based business licenses, to determine exactly what types of businesses they were.

Staff found that the businesses represented so many more industries and types of enterprises than they ever could have imagined. They represented traditional, network/direct marketing, franchisees, telecommuters, government contractors, entrepreneurs, agriculturalists, and scientists/engineers and patent-holders from nearby research labs and colleges. The existing business list included oyster farmers, mead makers, cleaning companies, construction contractors, bakers, artisans of all types, homeopathic doctors, photographers, inventors, and everything in between.

After researching business license data, going back through past business retention surveys, considering the community’s location near many Department of Defense and technology assets, and looking through national trend data, staff realized that the home-based business movement was here to stay in York County. Businesses were doing what they had to do to survive, and for many, that meant moving “back home.” The finances of doing so had clearly helped many to survive the recession. Staff recognized the need to establish programs for these busi-



2016 Home-Based Business Resource Fair & Conference Exhibit Hall.

## HOME-BASED BUSINESS LUNCH & LEARN SESSIONS

<p><b>APRIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Topics: Contracts, Liability, Patents, Business Structures, &amp; More</li> </ul> <p><b>MAY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic Marketing &amp; Social Media Security</li> </ul> <p><b>JUNE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking Like a Boss!</li> </ul> <p><b>JULY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber Security for Your HBB</li> </ul> <p><b>AUGUST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding From Owner-Operator to Having Help!</li> </ul> <p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powerful Presentations and Proposals</li> </ul> <p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Marketing Strategies for Small Budgets &amp; Little Time</li> </ul>	<p><b>FEBRUARY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber Security for Your Home-Based Business</li> </ul> <p><b>MARCH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax Topics Unique to Your Home-Based Business</li> </ul> <p><b>APRIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving Work-Life Balance as a Home-Based Business Owner</li> </ul> <p><b>MAY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping Sane: Organizing Strategies &amp; Tips for Your Home-Based Business</li> </ul> <p><b>JUNE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building &amp; Leading Successful Teams</li> </ul> <p><b>JULY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Topics for Your Home-Based Business</li> </ul> <p><b>AUGUST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance Topics for Home-Based Businesses</li> </ul> <p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling Yourself: Powerful Presentations and Proposals</li> </ul> <p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Marketing &amp; Networking Strategies for Small Budgets &amp; Little Time</li> </ul>	<p><b>MARCH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oops, Did I Do That? Developing Solid Presentation &amp; Communications Skills</li> </ul> <p><b>APRIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What a Great Idea! But, Will it Work?</li> </ul> <p><b>MAY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success through Service: Servant Leadership for Networking &amp; Reputation</li> </ul> <p><b>JUNE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Only I had One More Hour in the Day!</li> </ul> <p><b>JULY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the New Tax Law Changes and the Implications for Small &amp; Home-based Businesses</li> </ul> <p><b>AUGUST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can I afford it? Smart Planning for Growth &amp; Change</li> </ul> <p><b>SEPTEMBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is Holding You Back from Reaching Your Goals?</li> </ul> <p><b>OCTOBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Am I Liable? Protecting your HBB &amp; Personal Assets</li> </ul> <p><b>NOVEMBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frazzled? Clearing the Air: The Art of Reviewing, Removing, &amp; Regrouping</li> </ul>
2016	2017	2018

nesses and relationships with them, so that when the economy improved, they would know who to call for help in returning to or growing into commercial space. Since no existing programs could be found locally, or even at the state or federal level, to meet the needs of home-based business owners, the York County Home-Based Business Assistance Program was born!

The Home-Based Business Assistance Program is a comprehensive economic development initiative designed to help the home-based portion of the business community grow and thrive. The initiative was framed as a combination entrepreneurial/retention and expansion/attraction strategy. First, staff established the following goals and priorities for the initiative:

1. To increase business assistance programs and offerings to home-based businesses and entrepreneurs in our community.
2. To establish lasting relationships with the county's home-based business owners, so if growth occurs, they are motivated to stay in the county.
3. To entice home-based business owners out of their homes to attend events so they can:
  - a. Learn about assistance programs available to help them
  - b. Network and grow their businesses
  - c. Receive educational training to help their businesses

4. To improve the home-based business regulatory environment.

Next, the program components were developed and fleshed out. The first component of the program was a **Home-Based Business Transition Grant**, aimed at moving home-based business owners from their homes to commercial space. The county's Economic Development Authority appropriated \$20,000 for a pool of matching grant funds. Businesses could apply for up to \$2,000 in matching dollars to assist with transition expenses in moving to commercial space. Unfortunately, staff quickly realized this was not the type of help the majority of these businesses needed, as interest in the program was lower than originally anticipated. This program still has merit, as two of the county's objectives are to lower the commercial vacancy rates and to encourage home-based businesses to grow. Staff set out to determine the more pressing needs of local home-based business owners. When interviewed, most home-based business owners said they were happy working out of their homes for many reasons, some personal and some financial, and that their more important needs were for education, marketing, and networking.

Staff then developed two new components of the program (i.e. Phase II) to meet additional needs of this sector. The first was the **Home-Based Business Resource Fair & Conference**, an annual day-long event that features a resource fair with over 30 service-providing exhibitors, as well as conference sessions and specialty breakout tracts.



The session topics are relevant to all types of home-based businesses and the breakout tracts delve deeper into industry-specific topics for traditional, franchise, and direct and network marketing. The second was the **Home-Based Business Lunch & Learn Series**, which is a more in-depth continuation of the most popular topics from the Resource Fair & Conference. Lastly, staff reviewed all existing business assistance programs and reworked them so that home-based businesses could apply to these programs and benefit from them. The majority of these programs focus on marketing assistance, such as the E-Commerce Grant Program, Google Street View for Business Grant Program, and exposure on the county's buy local website [www.KeepItInYorkCounty.com](http://www.KeepItInYorkCounty.com).

Most recently, a recognition award has been added, which celebrates the **Home-Based Business of the Year**. This award will be given at the county's annual business

appreciation event called The Distinguished Business Affair, a popular networking and awards reception that has been celebrated for over 35 years and attracts well over 100 local business owners.

In addition to the development of internal programs, staff reached out to several other business assistance organizations in the community and partnered with them to create additional benefits and programs for home-based businesses. Partnerships were formed with the York County Chamber of Commerce and the Launchpad: Greater Williamsburg Business Incubator to meet home-based business needs, such as affordable meeting space outside of their homes on an occasional basis and the need for changes in the county's home-based business ordinance to make it easier to do business. Both organizations were already county-supported, so it was a natural fit to work with them to design programs and

## HOME-BASED BUSINESS CONFERENCE SESSIONS

			Morning	Afternoon
<b>TOP TIPS PANELS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Insurance</li> <li>Tax &amp; Legal Matters</li> <li>Budgeting, Bookkeeping, &amp; Banking</li> <li>Cybersecurity &amp; Data Protection</li> <li>HR Topics</li> <li>Networking</li> <li>Marketing on a Budget</li> <li>Time Management &amp; Organization</li> <li>Local Grant Programs &amp; Resources</li> <li>Zoning, Land Use, &amp; Special Use Permits</li> <li>Business Licenses &amp; Taxes</li> </ul>	<b>PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT PANEL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cybersecurity &amp; Data Protection   Legal Matters   Tax Topics   Business Insurance</li> </ul> <b>GROWING YOUR HOME-BASED BUSINESS PANEL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time Management &amp; Organization   Networking &amp; Self-Branding Techniques   HR Topics: Employee or Contractor   Marketing Essentials</li> </ul>	<b>PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT PANEL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cybersecurity &amp; Data Protection   Legal Matters   Tax Topics &amp; Payment Processing Options   Business Insurance</li> </ul> <b>GROWING YOUR HOME-BASED BUSINESS PANEL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HBB Resources you Need to Know About: State &amp; Local Programs, Offices, &amp; Resources   Achieving a Positive Life/Work Balance: Time &amp; Clutter Management   Electronic Marketing for your HBB</li> </ul>		
<b>DIRECT SALES &amp; NETWORK MARKETING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Endless Pipeline: How to Perpetuate Leads and Customer Referrals</li> <li>How to Manage Your Emotions and Stay Consistent</li> <li>Evaluating Opportunities: How to Choose the Right Company for You</li> <li>How to Build Teams and Develop Leaders</li> </ul> <b>HOME-BASED FRANCHISES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating Opportunities: How to Choose the Right Franchise for You</li> <li>Business Development 101: How to Find Customers and Win Contracts</li> <li>Get With the Program: How to Succeed Without Reinventing the Wheel</li> <li>How to Choose and Train the Right Employees</li> </ul> <b>TRADITIONAL HOME-BASED BUSINESSES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing &amp; Promotion: How to Get the Word Out</li> <li>Art of the Deal: Using Consultative Selling to Win New Business</li> <li>Get Your Foot in the Door: How to Win Contracts with the Government</li> <li>Taking the Plunge: How to Survive Your First Year in Business &amp; Manage the Ups &amp; Downs</li> </ul>	<b>DIRECT SALES &amp; NETWORK MARKETING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filling the Funnel: How to Perpetuate Leads &amp; Customer Referrals</li> <li>The Secret to Long-Term Residual Income - 12 Success Factors</li> <li>How to Build Teams, Develop Leaders, &amp; Duplicate Success</li> <li>Keeping Your Head in the Game!</li> </ul> <b>TRADITIONAL HOME-BASED BUSINESSES &amp; FRANCHISES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Credit Card Processing Options, Regulations, Liability, &amp; Tips</li> <li>Managing &amp; Financing Growth for Long-Term Success</li> <li>Marketing &amp; Social Media: Growing Your Business on a Small Budget</li> <li>Surviving in Business: Overcoming Obstacles &amp; Maintaining a Positive Life/Work Balance</li> </ul> <b>MISCELLANEOUS WORKSHOPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doing Business with the Government: SWAM Certification, eVA Registration, &amp; How to Win Government Contracts</li> <li>Starting Out the Right Way: The Process, Local Specifics, &amp; Local &amp; State Assistance Programs &amp; Organizations</li> <li>Chew on This: Food Topics for Home-based Culinary Businesses</li> <li>In-Depth Cybersecurity, Social Media Security, &amp; Data Protection</li> </ul>	<b>DIRECT SALES &amp; NETWORK MARKETING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filling the Funnel: How to Perpetuate Leads and Customer Referrals</li> <li>How the Recent FTC Ruling Affects Your Business</li> <li>How to Build Teams, Develop Leaders, &amp; Duplicate Success</li> <li>Keeping Your Head in the Game!</li> </ul> <b>TRADITIONAL HOME-BASED BUSINESSES &amp; FRANCHISES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telling your Story: Branding &amp; Public Relations for Home-Based Businesses</li> <li>Planning &amp; Financing Growth for Long-Term Success</li> <li>Making HBB Life Easier: Organizational and Time Management Strategies</li> <li>How to Network &amp; Leverage Circles of Influence</li> </ul> <b>HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doing Business with the Government: SWAM Certification, eVA Registration Workshop</li> <li>Quickbooks Training for your Home-Based Business</li> </ul>		
2015	2016	2017		



benefits under their existing tier structures that would specifically benefit this home-based sector of the business community. Both organizations rose to the challenge by offering reduced membership rates and reduced rates for occasional office/conference room rentals for home-based businesses. The York County Chamber also created a Home-Based Business Ordinance Review Committee to review the current ordinance and suggest positive changes to the County Board of Supervisors.

Future program components include:

- a vendor fair, where home-based businesses can show the community all that they have to offer;
- roundtable lunches with the county's elected officials, where business owners can speak one-on-one with board members to discuss matters related to owning a home-based business in York County; and
- focus groups to help York County staff learn more about the unique needs of the local home-based businesses.

The program has garnered interest from many of York County's neighboring localities, so work is also underway to transition the program to a more regional initiative.

The program results, and subsequent recognition of York County's home-based business initiative by the International Economic Development Council, the National Association of Counties, and the Virginia Association of Counties, speak for themselves. The Home-Based Business Assistance Program has been extremely successful in accomplishing the objectives set forth for the program and its many components. Over 600 local business owners have attended training and networking events to grow their businesses, some of which have subsequently transitioned into commercial space in the county. Many businesses have received grant funding to help their business continue to thrive and grow. Most importantly, hundreds of new relationships have been established with local home-based businesses, where few existed before the program began.

York County's Home-Based Business Assistance Program is an innovative trendsetter for local government economic development. The program is meeting the needs of a growing and untapped population and York County is proud to be at the forefront of this growing trend.

Business retention and expansion experts routinely say that the key to growing existing businesses is relationship-building, which is one of the main goals of developing a home-based business assistance program. Savvy economic developers will take note and work to develop assistance programs that meet the specific needs of home-based business enterprises in their communities, to complement their traditional retention and attraction strategies.



2016 Home-Based Business Tax Topics Lunch & Learn session.

## CONCLUSION

Many experts agree that home-based businesses are the wave of the future for much of the world's workforce. As this trend becomes more of a norm, more programs will undoubtedly emerge to meet the needs of this sector. Most economic development organizations are not currently focusing on this targeted home-based business group, instead choosing to maintain the traditionally-accepted focus on new business attraction and retention of existing brick-and-mortar companies.

Entrepreneurial startups and home-based businesses are growing substantially, with no signs of slowing, due in large part to changing demographics and recent technological advances. Might you have the next Google or Apple hiding in a home in your community, just waiting to be found? How would one know if programs do not exist to "smoke them out" and assist with their very unique needs? Business retention and expansion experts routinely say that the key to growing existing businesses is relationship-building, which is one of the main goals of developing a home-based business assistance program. Savvy economic developers will take note and work to develop assistance programs that meet the specific needs of home-based business enterprises in their communities, to complement their traditional retention and attraction strategies. 🌐

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> "Home Based Business Statistics In America," *BusinessforHome.org* – Accessed November 27, 2017, <https://www.businessforhome.org/2012/07/home-based-business-in-america/>
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