



"I am very excited about the Economic Gardening program that has been started in the state. It comes at a perfect time for my quickly expanding small business. To have this as a resource to help me make informed decisions moving forward is absolutely invaluable."

Benjamin C. Winters,  
OD, FCOVD, Owner/Clinical Director  
Washington Vision Therapy Center

# ECONOMIC GARDENING

Taking your company to the next level.



**ECONOMIC GARDENING** is designed to get you over that hump, allowing you to leverage your strengths, reduce risk and seize opportunities in the marketplace. This proven model, which has a long track record of success nationwide, was introduced by the Washington State Department of Commerce in 2016. It offers qualifying businesses in the state actionable, strategic intelligence backed by an experienced team of business experts.

## GOT A QUESTION?

Please contact us.

Office of Economic Development  
& Competitiveness  
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Department of Commerce



**AS THE CEO**, you know your company better than anyone else. You also know that as your company grows, there are times when you could use a little extra help to make informed decisions about potential markets, new competitors, effective lead generation or getting the most out of your website or social media channels.

This is particularly true for second-stage companies that are trying to get over the hump in terms of growth and expansion. Growth can be risky, especially when you don't have access to the necessary resources, knowledgebase and data.





### HOW IT WORKS.

As an Economic Gardening participant, you gain virtual access to a team of research specialists who are matched specifically to your company. This team is assembled by the Edward Lowe Foundation's National Center for Economic Gardening and works with you and your local Economic Gardening consultant to identify specific issues related to growth and expansion through conference calls and an online workspace. This team will provide you with up to 36 hours of expertise over the course of a few weeks to deliver action-oriented information and intelligence that is usually unavailable to small businesses.

The cost to participate in the program is just \$750. The balance of the economic gardening fee is paid for by the state and local economic development entities.

If you are accepted into the program, you will spend 8 to 12 hours working closely with your research team. This team will spend an additional 20 to 24 hours working behind the scenes on the issues you have collectively identified during the interview and consulting process.

Meetings and online work are arranged with your busy schedule in mind. You don't even need to leave the office, since the entire program is conducted via phone conferences and a secure online portal. It takes 4 to 8 weeks to complete the program.

### AREAS OF FOCUS.

Economic Gardening focuses on five key aspects of business growth: core strategy, market dynamics, qualified sales leads, innovation and temperament.

As a participant, you will be provided with access to critical and timely industry trends and information, including:

- Data about current and new competitors.
- Analysis of your social media, web and search engine strategies to increase rankings, engagement and lead generation.
- Communication strategies with current and prospective customers.
- Insights into your core strategies and business model that can improve your decision making as you grow your business.

As a result, you will have an in-depth understanding of the marketplace, be able to identify prospective markets ripe for expansion, know where your current and prospective customers are, identify who your competitors are – including those that may not yet be on your radar – and update your business model and core strategies to position for growth.



### DO YOU QUALIFY?

The ideal candidate for the Economic Gardening program is a private, for-profit Washington State company that has been in our community for at least two years. This company should have 6 to 99 employees and generate between \$750,000 and \$50 million in annual revenue. Its products or services should be available beyond the local area and there should be a demonstrated desire, need and capacity to grow.

Your company must also meet at least one (if not more) of the following criteria to be eligible for the program:

- Your business must be located in an underserved county based on the latest Employment Security Department designation.
- It is located in a rural county, based on a combination of the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Financial Management data and definitions.
- It is based in counties that may suffer significant transitions as a result of military downsizing.
- It qualifies as a woman, minority or veteran owned business.

### THE PROCESS.

1. Complete the online application. Before you start, make sure you have revenue and employment numbers available for the last five years. You'll also be asked to name up to three strategic business issues you need assistance with.
2. We will contact you about your application to make sure it is complete and answer any questions you may have.
3. Your application will be reviewed by the selection team.
4. Once accepted into the program, we'll schedule an interview between you and the research team to start the process.

As your local partner in the Economic Gardening program, our certified consultant will be available to discuss opportunities with you, set expectations for the program and provide follow-up.

#### READY TO APPLY?

Our online application is easy to fill out and will help us assess how best Economic Gardening can help you. The application asks for general company information, number of employees and revenue for five years, and up to three business issues or challenges for which Economic Gardening research is desired.

Start the application process at:  
[washingtonstate.nationalcentereg.org](http://washingtonstate.nationalcentereg.org)