



## Growing Together: Empowering Our Business Community

**Duration:** 12 sessions (one per month or intensive version) **Language:** Spanish / English (bilingual)  
**Target Audience:** Latino entrepreneurs, immigrants, and small business owners in Hampton Roads and neighboring communities **Objective:** Strengthen capacity, visibility, and collaboration for the sustainable growth of local businesses.

### Program Structure

Each month or session includes:

1. Main Class (Education)
2. Networking or Collaboration Activity
3. Visibility or Promotion Opportunity

#### SESSION 1 – Start Strong: The Entrepreneurial Mindset

**Topic:** Turning vision into action

- Define your purpose and business “why”
- Understand risk, resilience, and opportunity
- Types of legal structures: LLC, corporation, sole proprietorship **Networking:** Growing Together kickoff meeting **Visibility:** Participant introductions on Chamber social media

#### SESSION 2 – Write Your Business Plan

**Topic:** From idea to action map

- Step-by-step guide: executive summary, market analysis, and financial plan
- Elevator pitch exercises **Networking:** Peer-to-peer business idea review **Visibility:** Launch of the “Business of the Month” initiative

#### SESSION 3 – Financial Fundamentals

**Topic:** Know your numbers

- Basic accounting and budget control
- Business banking and recordkeeping
- Credit, loans, and small business financing **Guest Speaker:** Representative from a local bank or CDFI **Visibility:** Creation of a financial summary sheet shared with sponsors

#### SESSION 4 – Contracts with Purpose

**Topic:** Protect what you build

- Contract basics for small businesses (construction, beauty, cleaning, etc.)
- Legal liability, taxes, and compliance
- Labor rights and subcontracting **Networking:** Connection with legal advisors and volunteer attorneys **Visibility:** Legal Advisory Day promoted in local media

#### SESSION 5 – Build Your Brand

**Topic:** Create a brand that tells your story

- Logo design, tagline, and positioning
- Bilingual marketing strategies
- Storytelling through social media **Workshop:** Create your “One-Page Brand Map” **Visibility:** Professional photo and video session organized by the Chamber

## **SESSION 6 – Promotion and Advertising**

**Topic:** Make the world know you

- Social media strategy and content calendar
- Digital and traditional advertising
- How to write press releases **Networking:** Collaboration with local media and influencers **Visibility:** Launch of the “Buy with Purpose” campaign

## **SESSION 7 – Access to Capital**

**Topic:** Find the funds to grow

- How to apply for grants, loans, and financing programs
- SBA programs and credit repair
- Practice presentations to banks or investors **Networking:** Speed networking with financial institutions **Visibility:** Special “Capital Connections” feature in Chamber newsletter

## **SESSION 8 – Digital Transformation**

**Topic:** Technology as a growth ally

- How to create a simple website
- How to accept digital payments
- Introduction to AI tools for marketing and planning **Workshop:** Build your online presence during the session **Visibility:** Chamber-promoted “Digital Business Week”

## **SESSION 9 – Customer Service and Sales**

**Topic:** The heart of every business

- Courtesy and customer care in two languages
- Effective sales and follow-up techniques
- Building loyalty and trust in the community **Networking:** Practical exercises among participants **Visibility:** “Community Choice” posts on Chamber social media

## **SESSION 10 – Growth and Collaborations**

**Topic:** Grow smart, grow together

- Partnerships with local institutions (YMCA, Sentara, city halls, universities)
- Subcontracting and government contract opportunities
- How to build a team and delegate effectively **Networking:** Business Alliances Roundtable **Visibility:** New collaborations announced in local media

## **SESSION 11 – The Power of Visibility**

**Topic:** Make your business seen and heard





- How to prepare for media interviews
- Writing press releases
- Social responsibility and giving back to the community **Networking:** Joint event with local leaders and media **Visibility:** Interviews in “Entre Mate y Tequila” or “Business Heart Notes”

## **SESSION 12 – Graduation and Business Expo**

**Topic:** Celebrate, connect, and continue

- Final presentations by participating businesses
- Certification ceremony with sponsors
- Public exhibition and expo with music and food **Networking:** B2B (business-to-business) exchange **Visibility:** Media coverage and official Chamber press release

## **Support Components**

-  **Mentorship Program:** Connection between experienced entrepreneurs and new business owners
-  **Virtual Resource Center:** Templates, guides, links to grants and financing
-  **Individual Advising:** Quarterly personalized consultations
-  **Business Directory:** Publicly accessible digital listing of member businesses