

**Q: What is Business First Greater Richmond?**

**A:** Business First is a successful business assistance program. It uses face-to-face interviews with top leaders of existing businesses to gather feedback on doing business in Richmond. This feedback helps our program partners connect businesses with the resources they need to stay and grow in the region and build an even better business climate. The Business First initiative is a regional effort led by the Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc., and the economic development offices in Chesterfield County, Hanover County, Henrico County and the City of Richmond. It is supported by dedicated volunteers from the business community who share our commitment to business success.

**Q: What are the goals of the program?**

**A:** The partners want to 1) thank area businesses for their contribution and commitment to the regional economy, 2) give businesses the opportunity to share their opinions about doing business in the region, 3) work better to understand the factors critical to business success and 4) connect businesses with the resources they need to be successful. For example, our partners can provide assistance with facility or product expansion efforts, address financing concerns or help troubleshoot workforce issues. Finally, we take all the information gathered from businesses, in aggregate form, and use it to help look for ways to improve the business climate in the Richmond region.

**Q: What will I have to do as a participant?**

**A:** It's simple, really: sit down for a face-to-face interview with a Business First representative to answer a few questions and share your opinions on doing business in Richmond. Participants will be contacted by a Business First representative from the economic development office in your community or by a trained Business First volunteer. Information is gathered in the interview which typically lasts 30 minutes.

**Q: How will the company information be used by the Business First program?**

**A:** First, the information obtained during the interview will be used to direct resources and assistance to participating companies when needed. For example, if you would like to learn more about export opportunities to new markets, we could refer you to a Business First partner with the appropriate expertise. The information and advice is provided to you at a low cost or absolutely free. Second, the information gathered is presented in summary form in a published

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report in July. No company names are ever used because the data is presented in aggregate form.

**Q: How do you identify the companies you want to interview?**

**A:** Each economic development office develops their own target list, a sample of area businesses, as each community is different and has a slightly different mix of industries. Companies may request, and are encouraged, to participate by visiting the Business First website at [www.businessfirstrichmond.com](http://www.businessfirstrichmond.com).

**Q: Who are the volunteers who conduct interviews with businesses?**

**A:** The volunteers are current or former business people who understand the importance of a thriving business community to the health of the Greater Richmond economy. More than 80 trained volunteers support this effort and work with our partners in Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and the City of Richmond.

**Q: What has the program accomplished? Why is it important?**

**A:** Since September 2006 when the Business First program launched, we have interviewed more than 2,400 area businesses representing more than 113,000 jobs in our community. Participating businesses have received assistance in areas such as international trade, business planning and strategy development, financing and workforce development. We know when your business thrives, the region thrives, and we want to do whatever we can to assist you with the achievement of your goals.

**Q: How can I find out more about participating in the Business First program as a business or a volunteer?**

**A:** For information on how to participate as a company, sign up online at [www.businessfirstrichmond.com](http://www.businessfirstrichmond.com) or contact your local economic development representative to schedule an interview.

Locality	Name	Email	Telephone
Chesterfield County	Karen A. Aylward	<a href="mailto:Karen@chesterfieldbusiness.com">Karen@chesterfieldbusiness.com</a>	804-748-3963
Hanover County	Tommy Miller	<a href="mailto:tjmiller@co.hanover.va.us">tjmiller@co.hanover.va.us</a>	804-365-6461
Henrico County	Leonard Cake	<a href="mailto:Leonard@henrico.com">Leonard@henrico.com</a>	804-501-7654
City of Richmond	Sheila H. Shepperson	<a href="mailto:shepperson@ci.richmond.va.us">shepperson@ci.richmond.va.us</a>	804-646-5491

To volunteer, contact Sara Dunnigan at the Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc. via email at [sdunnigan@grpva.com](mailto:sdunnigan@grpva.com) or by telephone at 804-643-3227.



Business First | Greater Richmond is a program supported by the Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc. in collaboration with the economic development offices of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and the City of Richmond.