



FAQ's

What is FastTrac?

FastTrac is a suite of courses that provide hands-on, intensive instruction to help entrepreneurs hone the skills needed to start, manage and grow a successful business. The City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities has partnered with Midlands Technical College to provide FastTrac GrowthVenture to Columbia businesses.

What is FastTrac GrowthVenture?

FastTrac GrowthVenture helps existing entrepreneurs:

- Make critical decisions about the business vision and strategy;
- Investigate next-stage growth and opportunity;
- Plan for strategic growth;
- Build and maintain a competitive advantage;
- Lead with clarity; and
- Maximize cash flow for future profitability.

Who can apply for FastTrac GrowthVenture?

You are eligible for FastTrac GrowthVenture if you have:

- A business that has been in operation for three or more years;
- A business that has achieved sales targets and has demonstrated market potential;
- A well thought out argument for how FastTrac GrowthVenture will benefit your company;
- Access to a computer to complete assignments; and
- Commitment to attend all sessions (approximately 30 classroom hours) and complete prep work.

Can more than one person from the same business apply to FastTrac GrowthVenture?

Given the volume of applications and limited number of seats, only one person per business can apply and be accepted to FastTrac GrowthVenture. If there is more than one business owner/partner, only one person should apply.

What will I accomplish by the end of FastTrac GrowthVenture?

By the end of the course, participants will have updated their business plan for strategic growth, and connected to services that will help them further expand their business and continuous services connections from the Office of Business Opportunities and various business partners' support.

How do I apply for FastTrac GrowthVenture?

Learn more about FastTrac and apply at the City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities, where you will also find the upcoming course date and location: <http://columbiasc.gov/obo/technical-assistance/fasttrac>.

Application Deadline - December 27, 2019

Office of Business Opportunities:

Attn: Kalenna Ginyard
1401 Main Street, 4th Floor
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803-545-3960



Who teaches FastTrac courses?

FastTrac courses are taught by course facilitators and business coaches who are experienced entrepreneurs in various business fields.

How are FastTrac courses structured?

Each session the course facilitator presents a lesson to the class, followed by breakout work groups, during which participants perform in-class brainstorming exercises and review assignments and aspects of their business plans. Also, guest speakers make presentations to participants throughout the course to offer insight into a particular aspect of starting or managing a business.

What is the class size for FastTrac GrowthVenture?

Each FastTrac course includes 15 to 20 participants; the City may provide scholarships for 12 participants.

How much does FastTrac GrowthVenture course cost? The cost for FastTrac GrowthVenture is \$825.00. However, the City of Columbia will pay \$500 of the cost. Participants will only have to pay \$325 for registration, books, networking, and lifetime access to resources at Kauffman Foundation. **(Fee Schedule subject to change)**

1. For **FastTrac GrowthVenture**, applicants will be rated based on their stated business needs. It is important that applicants submit thorough descriptions and responses to questions in order to strengthen their applications and improve their chance of acceptance.
2. Participants will be notified of their acceptance not later than one week before the course start date.

Where is FastTrac GrowthVenture course held?

This course will be held at the Midlands Technical College Northeast Campus, 151 Powell Road, Columbia, SC 29203

May I register for a course if I will not be able to attend all sessions?

It is required that participants attend all course sessions in order to graduate and benefit fully from FastTrac. All admitted participants are required to sign a commitment letter confirming that they are available and will attend all sessions of the course.

How many hours of outside work will I be expected to complete? FastTrac GrowthVenture requires participants to work on their business plans and conduct research outside of class. Outside coursework will require a minimum of 10 to 15 hours per week for the duration of the course.

Will I be able to access help for operating or expanding my business after the course is over?

Yes, you will have access to resources after the course is over. During your FastTrac course, you will be directed to available tools, resources, and services to expand your business following the completion of the course.

How much will I be expected to participate in class discussions?

Your participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged and will help you benefit fully from FastTrac. Work groups with business coaches and other participants are only as useful as participants make them through their engagement in discussions and brainstorming exercises.

How do I stay connected with my classmates and facilitators after the course is over?

You are encouraged to stay connected via social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, and Facebook, share contact information, and continue to interact with your peers and facilitators after your course is complete.

