



Services available through the Illinois SBDC at Harper College are tailored to meet the specific needs of individual owners and operators.

Photo: Harper College

Illinois Small Business Development Center Offers One-on-One Advising for Local Business Owners

Q. Where can small business owners in Rolling Meadows and throughout the northwest suburbs go for trustworthy guidance that helps them effectively navigate the challenges of starting, operating, and growing a successful business?

A. The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Harper College, which offers a wide range of programs and services for those just starting a new enterprise or who are exploring avenues for continued growth.

Service Overview

The SBDC's six-member advisory team is equipped to help start-ups, small, medium, and home-based businesses in practically any field - at no cost. These services, which are tailored to meet the specific needs of individual owners and operators, include:

- Hosting confidential one-on-one discussions and consulting sessions.

- Providing business plan review and guidance.
- Discussing options for process improvements and ways to streamline operations.
- Sharing management, marketing, financial, and operational advice.
- Brainstorming new business opportunities.
- Presenting educational seminars and workshops.

Editor's

note: The SBDC does not work with 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and is not a source for loans and/or other financial assistance.

The program, one of 900 SBDCs across the country, is funded through a partnership with the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and Harper College.

"Every member of our business advisory team has been, or is currently, a business owner," explained Tom Cassell, Director, Illinois SBDC at Harper College. "Our goal is to help local entrepreneurs equip themselves with the information they need to make decisions that are best for their unique situations.



"Personally, what I enjoy most is sharing what I've learned - not only from my own experiences, but also from the many clients I've worked with over the years," he added.

Pandemic Confirms SBDC's Vital Role

The Illinois SBDC at Harper College provides advisory services to approximately 350 area businesses per year, on average. That number skyrocketed in 2020 and 2021, as the Covid-19 pandemic put the world on lockdown and created intense economic anxiety.

Mr. Cassell and his team spent hours each day talking with local business owners - many of whom would call to ask about information on different types of financial assistance being offered at the federal, state, and local levels. Others would call simply because they were overwhelmed and felt they had nowhere else to turn.

"That was a very challenging time," Mr. Cassell recalled. "On many days, it felt like we weren't able to do enough. The feedback we received

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City Unveils 'New Look' Website

Rolling Meadows unveiled a fresh new look for the City's website (www.cityrm.org) on November 3rd.

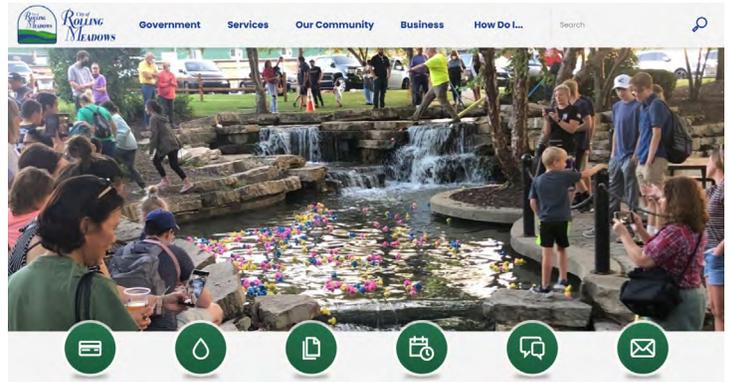
The updated platform incorporates a more streamlined layout and improved navigation features to help users find the information they seek.

City officials believe the redesign will improve their ability to deliver news and updates to community members.

What has not changed is the website's role as an informational clearinghouse for

supporting local businesses. Highlights include:

- Details on Rolling Meadows' **Retail & Restaurant Incentives Program**, including online application forms.
- Overview of the City's **6b Classification review process** that helps industrial business owners take advantage of potential property tax reductions.
- Listings of **available properties** (via interactive map).
- Links to the City's recently



- updated **Building Codes, Zoning Code, and Comprehensive Plan.**
- One-click access to the **RM Business Buzz** website.

• And more.
Find these and other resources at www.cityrm.org/35/Business.

Staff Leadership Updates Meet New Public Works Director Aaron Grosskopf



Aaron Grosskopf

Rolling Meadows' sterling reputation for providing exceptional services to residents and businesses was well known to Aaron Grosskopf long before he was hired as the City's new Public Works Director.

"I took a walking tour with some of the superintendents during the interview process, which allowed me to experience first-hand the pride they take in the Department's services," Grosskopf recalled. "I love the City's overall feel but, more than anything, I'm excited to join this

team and work with the people who have set those standards of excellence."

Grosskopf started his career as a summer laborer with Oswego Township during high school. He later became the township's Operations Manager/Safety Coordinator. He next served as Woodstock's Street Superintendent and then Public Works Director for the Village of Gilberts before coming to Rolling Meadows in August.

He holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from Aurora University.

Welcome New Fire Department Leaders

Rolling Meadows' Fire Department has a new Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.



Pete Sutter

Pete Sutter, who has served with the RMFD for 21 years, took the helm as Fire Chief in August, following the retirement of his predecessor, Jeff Moxley. Sutter spent 12 years as a "blue shirt" before earning promotion to

Lieutenant (2013), Battalion Chief (2018), and Deputy Chief (2021).

He holds a Fire Science degree from Harper College and a bachelor's degree in Public Safety Management from Southern Illinois University.

Scott Mohr, a former Assistant Chief with the Inverness Fire Protection District who has served as Rolling Meadows Fire Marshal for the past eight years, succeeds Sutter as Deputy Chief.

Renew Business Licenses by December 31st

Business license renewal applications for calendar year 2023 were sent to all Rolling Meadows-based businesses in October. Please submit completed forms with payment by December 31st.

Past due applications will be assessed a late fee that doubles the cost of the annual license.

For more information, including a full business license fee schedule, visit www.cityrm.org/176/Business-Licenses.



Next Level Northwest (NLNW) is a regional business accelerator that helps small companies solve challenging business issues, increase productivity, and grow the local economy. Learn more about how your business can benefit from NLNW support by contacting Martha Corner, Rolling Meadows Business Advocate (847-870-9004 or cornerm@cityrm.org).

Veterans Committee 'Enlists' Help from Local Businesses for Flag Collection Project

An effort spearheaded by the Rolling Meadows Veterans Committee to obtain a collection receptacle for storing old and worn American Flags until they are ceremoniously retired



was made possible, in large part, with the financial assistance of **Northrop Grumman Corporation**.

Northrop Grumman's donation, made to the Community Events Foundation and earmarked specifically for veterans-related initiatives, allowed Committee members to purchase the all-weather collection box that now stands outside City Hall (3600 Kirchoff Road).

"We are endlessly grateful for Northrop Grumman's support of this worthy effort," Veterans Committee Chair Ron Willer explained. "With decreasing options available

for gathering and storing old flags, this collection box offers added convenience for our fellow community members while ensuring a measure of respect for Old Glory and all it represents."

Another local business also played an important role in the project's successful completion: Rolling Meadows-based **Suburban Accents** designed and created the box's graphics and color scheme.

The City Hall collection box is intended to hold flags owned by residents, businesses, and community groups that are no longer suitable for public display. Donated flags will be

retired at a ceremony hosted by the Veterans Committee on Flag Day (June 14th).

The United States Flag Code, Title 4, Section 8k, states, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

For information on U.S. Flag protocol, please visit www.usa.gov/flag.

Visit www.cityrm.org/679/Community-Events-Foundation to learn more about options for supporting upcoming City events and community initiatives.

Chamber Seeks Local Business Support for Innovative 'Young Entrepreneurs Academy' Initiative

The Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce, along with other members of the regional Chamber Co-Op, is seeking financial support from area businesses for a groundbreaking program that helps local students gain real-world entrepreneurial skills.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!), an after-school program that runs November – May, takes young people through the process of starting and running real businesses. Class members visit area companies, meet with local entrepreneurs and profes-

sionals, and develop business or social movement plans.

They then "pitch" these ideas to a live panel of investors – business and community leaders – to obtain funding and launch their venture.

"YEA! Students learn important life lessons while gaining an appreciation for the skills they are learning in school," explained Steven Gaus, the Chamber's Business Development Director. "More importantly, the program helps young people tap into their passions, energies, creativity,

and talents – all while gaining the entrepreneurial skills that will help drive our economy in the future."

YEA! USA provides all training curriculum and materials required to operate the program. As a partner responsible for managing it at the local level, the Chamber encourages local business support via sponsorship tiers that range from \$500 – \$5,000.

For more information on sponsorship opportuni-



ties and benefits, or to apply for a YEA! volunteer staff position, contact the Chamber of Commerce at office@rmchamber.org or 847-398-3730.

Students can apply at www.rmchamber.org/young-entrepreneurs-academy.



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CONNECT WITH US	
City Manager's Office	847-394-8500
Community Development	847-506-6030
Finance Department	847-394-8500
Fire Department (non-emergency)	847-397-3352
Police Department (non-emergency)	847-255-2416
Public Works Department	847-963-0500

Connect with us at www.cityrm.org or through:   

Event Sponsorships Help Forge Connections with Customers

Businesses that sponsor Rolling Meadows' community events enjoy an outstanding – and cost-effective – opportunity to connect with customers and build brand equity at the grassroots level.

Sponsoring organizations are prominently featured in all promotional and marketing materials, including the Rolling Meadows website (www.cityrm.org) and RM Business Buzz (www.rmbusinessbuzz.com).

www.cityrm.org), social media platforms, monthly and quarterly newsletters, and more.

These initiatives encourage public attendance at events and expand awareness of sponsoring companies' products and services.

To learn more about business sponsorships and plans for 2023 community events, contact Lori Ciezak at ciezakl@cityrm.org or 847-394-8500 x 1002.



December's Holiday Celebration puts a "wrap" on the City's annual calendar of community events.

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from the clients we worked with, however, was incredibly positive. They were thankful for our assistance. I think part of it was simply being there; they didn't feel so alone."

Growing Demand for Services

Over the past 15 months, there has been a surge in demand for local SBDC services – specifically from individuals who are interested in launching new businesses.

Mr. Cassell can't be sure of the reasons for the increased client traffic and overall interest in SBDC offerings, but he has a theory.

"After the past two years and after everything that has happened during the pandemic, I think more people are eager to build something they can call their own," he said.

If and when they do, they'll find plenty of support – and a team of trusted advisors – at the Illinois SBDC at Harper College.

Apply Online; Schedule an Appointment

Visit www.harpercollege.edu/business/sbdc to apply and schedule an appointment with an SBDC business advisor. The website also allows users to explore/register for upcoming programs.