

# MASON ENTERPRISE CENTER-FAIRFAX CLIENT HANDBOOK

## WELCOME TO THE MEC

**Welcome to the Mason Enterprise Center!** We are excited that you have chosen the Mason Enterprise Center as the base of operations for your business. You have joined a business support program that accelerates the successful development of small businesses by providing entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services.

The Mason Enterprise Center in Fairfax (MEC-Fairfax or MEC) is designed to facilitate the growth and development of emerging, growth business by providing a nurturing environment, one-on-one business mentoring and counseling, access to networking, support services and partnering opportunities.

As a client of the MEC-Fairfax Business Accelerator, you will have access to management guidance, technical assistance, networking opportunities and consulting tailored toward your growing businesses. Clients have access to dedicated office space and flexible leases, shared basic business services and equipment, technology support services and assistance in obtaining the financing necessary for business growth.

A basic outline of **the services and support available** to you is summarized in this handbook. Keep in mind that some of the most valuable rewards to participation in the MEC-Fairfax Accelerator Program come from the **community of entrepreneurs** who now surround you every day. Please take advantage of your accessibility to small business peers, staff and service partners.

Thank you for your participation in the MEC-Fairfax Business Accelerator. We look forward to working with you and wish your company much success.

Sincerely,

**Gisele Stolz**  
Business Accelerator Director  
Mason Enterprise Center

## BUSINESS ASSISTANCE SERVICES

The MEC-Fairfax was established in 1995 as a partnership initiative between George Mason University and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Fairfax (EDA). The MEC-Fairfax offers a comprehensive array of services and support to client companies selected for participation. The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are designed to optimize successful outcomes for MEC-Fairfax staff and clients. The MEC-Fairfax reserves the right to modify the policies, procedures, resources, and services of the MEC-Fairfax as stated and contained herein in order to better serve the interests of the MEC-Fairfax and participating client companies.

You have joined a business support program that accelerates the successful development of small businesses by providing entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services.

The following services are provided to client companies based on availability and need:

### Support Services

- Free one-on-one business consultation with MEC Business Mentors and subject matter experts (lawyer, accountant, strategy expert, CFO, marketing and branding expert, banker, HR and recruiting)
- Free one-on-one business consultation, including advice on business planning, strategic planning, market research and financing alternatives through MEC partners (SBDC, PTAC, ICAP, International Trade)
- Advanced level seminars and workshops focused on growth and scaling
- Access to George Mason University students and faculty
- Access to MEC and partner organizations' networking events
- Referrals to trusted experts in the "Friends of Mason Enterprise Center" professional network, comprised of consultants in the areas of legal, marketing, accounting, human relations, government contracting, technology and finance
- Benefits include:
  - 35% discount for Paychex services
  - Option to participate in a group medical insurance plan through Kaiser Permanente
  - Access to George Mason University's Career Services and Career Fairs

- Discounts to Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce membership
- Access to KPMG Spark services
- Introduction to local banks and financial services companies

## Other Opportunities

- Up to 50% of first year rent paid for high-tech high-growth spin-offs of University or State research programs through Atlantic Union Bank’s sponsorship program
- City of Fairfax move-in incentive grant of \$5,000 for high-growth companies
- City of Fairfax Technology Zone Incentive: The City of Fairfax Technology Zone (or the “Zone”) offers businesses in the City a reduction or suspension of certain business license (Business, Professional, Occupational License, or “BPOL”) taxes for a period of up to five years with a 100 percent exemption for the first year and a decreasing percentage for years two through five. The purpose of the Technology Zone is to provide an incentive for a targeted sector of businesses to establishment, relocate, or expand within the City.
- City Connected \$15,000 move out grant from the City of Fairfax for graduating companies remaining within City limits.

## Facility Amenities

- Professionally furnished office space
- Shared receptionist to greet visitors and sign for packages
- Use of conference rooms (two) and meeting rooms (11)
- Telephone answering service with direct lines available and private voice mail
- High speed internet access
- Audio/visual equipment
- Secure mailbox
- Shared fax machine / Shared photocopy machine
- Kitchen privileges with Starbucks coffee machines
- Mail and courier services
- Free on-site parking
- 24x7 access

## MEC-FAIRFAX PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Mason Enterprise Center Business Accelerator is designed to offer a full range of services and support to client companies eligible for participation. Applications are available on our website [MEC-Fairfax.org](http://MEC-Fairfax.org).

### MEC-Fairfax Selection Criteria

The Mason Enterprise Center-Fairfax provides services to a wide range of entrepreneurs. Applicants for the business incubator are subject to the following criteria:

- High growth potential
- Innovative product or service, beyond the conceptual stage
- Initial financing in place
- Executive management in place
- Solid business and professional references
- Good personal financial statement and credit
- Business should have an executive summary, or business model canvas
- Must be current on all federal, state and local tax obligations
- Applicant must be willing to comply with all regulations, guidelines and policies as they relate to the program.
- Business owner(s) and /or business have not previously left the program with a debt, defaulted lease agreement, or business closure.

Businesses can reenter the program if they have previously left the program in good standing prior to graduating.

### Other Criteria:

- Business is suitable to operate in a “professional office environment” and does not require a large waiting area for customers or unattended children, or extensive parking needs.
- Generally compatible with the incubator community, and willingness to support and promote MEC-Fairfax’s mission. Does not weaken or alter the MEC-Fairfax image or purpose, nor negatively affect other participants’ business operations.

- Willingness to conduct business in an open, collaborative and cooperative fashion with the Center, including regular status reports to the Business Accelerator Director, MEC-Fairfax.
- There is no restriction on the number of similar businesses, businesses with the same or similar function, or businesses that provide the same or similar good or service that may participate in the MEC-Fairfax Business Accelerator or may occupy the MEC-Fairfax at any one time.

### Ineligible Businesses:

- Regulated lending institutions
- Real estate investment businesses
- Any store which principle business is the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption
- Religious organizations

## ADMISSION GUIDELINES

Businesses that participate in the MEC-Fairfax Business Accelerator Program agree to the following conditions, which are devised in an effort to promote successful business outcomes:

- Client will provide a **valid business license**
- Client will obtain insurance and provide a copy of their **certificate of insurance**, and such insurance shall be maintained for duration of client's participation in the MEC-Fairfax Business Incubator Program
- **Client company will attend at a minimum, one business related class or workshop semi-annually** (i.e. MEC lunch and learns, class or workshop, networking event, etc.) offered by the MEC-Fairfax.
- At the time of admission and on an annual basis, Client will provide the MEC-Fairfax management with the following information in support of measuring program outcomes:
  - Number of employees
  - Projected Annual Revenue
  - Spinoffs, Acquisitions Rollups
  - Change in product or service offerings
  - Internship/Externship Opportunities
  - Updates regarding business outcomes (i.e. grant awards, news coverage, new contracts, patents, etc.)

## EXIT AND GRADUATION CRITERIA

A client's progress toward achieving the graduation objectives will be evaluated within three years of its admission to the MEC-Fairfax, and annually thereafter based on the following criteria:

- Company has experienced significant revenue growth and/or profitability allowing client to continue operation without further assistance from MEC-Fairfax services and support (number of employees, facilities, etc.),
- Business is acquired by another company, and/or
- Company gives appropriate notice of leaving as outlined in Lease Agreement.

The director will determine a date for graduation within six months of the client's lease expiration. If there are existing leases whose terms extend beyond the six-month guideline, the director will negotiate an early termination of such a lease. Clients may be permitted to remain in the MEC past the graduation / termination date determined above on a month-to-month basis.

## TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

Companies participating in the MEC-Fairfax may depart from the program at any time by notifying the Mason Enterprise Center **in writing one full calendar month prior to exiting**. For example, if you give your termination notice on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, you are still liable for rent the full month of April and your lease will terminate on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Mason Enterprise Center reserves the right to terminate a company's participation in the program due to any of the following:

- Actions which are illegal or detrimental to the MEC-Fairfax or that have caused harm to other MEC-Fairfax clients
- Violation of the client's lease or MEC-Fairfax Rules and Procedures
- Failure to occupy and utilize office space
- Failure of company to pay rental fees when due. Late fees are applicable.
- Failure of client to perform or observe terms of the MEC-Fairfax Guidelines and Procedures
- Companies will receive a written notice 30 days prior to termination, except where the lease and/or law permit a shorter notice period
- Security deposits will be refunded in accordance with the lease and Virginia law following the return of all issued keys and the inspection of the space to ensure that no damages occurred during participation in the program. Security deposits cannot be used to cover the last month's participation fee.

# FACILITIES OPERATION

## Business Hours

- MEC-Fairfax Reception Hours of operation are:
  - Monday-Friday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM\*
  - Saturday-Sunday: Closed to General Public

\*After Hour access is available by Key Fob access only. Note that these hours are subject to change.

- The MEC-Fairfax generally observes all federal holidays each year. The dates will be posted and emailed as listed below.

○ New Year's Day	○ Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
○ Memorial Day	○ Independence Day
○ Labor Day	○ Thanksgiving Observance
○ Winter Holiday Closing - GMU	

## After Hours Access

All entrances to the MEC main office will automatically lock at 5:00 PM each weekday evening. After hours entry will require your key-fob access. If you are already in the building at that time, please make sure that visitors are not granted access upon leaving. If you have visitors / employees who need to get into the building after normal business hours, please instruct them to advise you of their anticipated arrival time so that you can meet them at the entrance door and escort them into the building.

The Building Front Door is open as follows. Note that these hours are subject to change.

- Monday-Friday: 6:30 AM – 7:30 PM
- Saturday: CLOSED
- Sunday: CLOSED

## Visitors

The front desk will notify client companies when visitors arrive in the reception area. Upon instruction, your clients / customers will either be directed to your office or asked to be seated and wait in the reception area for you.

## Inclement Weather Policy

The MEC-Fairfax will close administrative offices in conjunction with George Mason University official announcements regarding delays or cancellations due to inclement weather conditions.

While recognizing the importance of maintaining your business operations, the safety of those concerned will be the priority regarding this decision.

## **Mailbox Usage**

MEC-Fairfax Incubator Program clients may use the following information for mail:

4031 University Drive, Suite 100  
Fairfax, VA 22030

All mail will be left in your designated mailbox, and it is the client's responsibility to ensure mail is picked up on a regular basis.

## **Lock and Key Policy**

Each Client shall be issued two keys upon taking possession of its office space. The MEC-Fairfax administrative staff will maintain a Master Key for all Client spaces. Clients may purchase additional keys from the MEC-Fairfax for \$10 each and key-fobs for \$25 each. Clients cannot change locks or place additional locks on any doors within their suites without the approval of the MEC-Fairfax Director. All locks would subsequently be re-keyed to the building standards at the Client's expense.

There will be a \$25.00 charge to replace lost key-fobs. All keys and key-fobs must be surrendered upon termination of the lease agreement.

## **Photocopying**

Photocopying machines are in the mailroom and on the 3rd floor. Copy cards, which may be purchased from the MEC office for \$5 and then loaded with client funds, are required for use.

## **Fax Machine**

The fax machine is located on in the mailroom on the first floor. Faxes received under your company name or your name will be placed in your mailbox when received.

The fax number is: 703.277.7730

## **UPS/Fed Ex/ Airborne Express**

The front desk will sign for all incoming packages and notify you by email. All packages will be left on or near the table in the mailroom.

## Kitchen Areas

Each floor has a refrigerator, coffee machine, and microwave. Please use these areas at your convenience. If you find a problem in any of these areas (coffee machine not working, no paper towels, etc.) please contact the front desk at 703.277.7700 or [MECFFX@gmu.edu](mailto:MECFFX@gmu.edu).

## CONFERENCE ROOM RESERVATIONS AND USAGE

The MEC-Fairfax offers conference space for business gatherings. Spaces are open to MEC-Fairfax clients and through prior agreement.

All MEC conference rooms and training spaces are well-equipped to handle working meetings and presentations. Should you require audio visual equipment, please request it when you make the reservation. While we have LCD projectors, they are always in demand and their availability cannot be guaranteed.

Conference room space is scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. You may request the room you prefer by phone (703-277-7700) or email ([mecffx@gmu.edu](mailto:mecffx@gmu.edu)). Clients will receive confirmation by email if the requested room is available and also notified if the request cannot be fulfilled. See <https://www.mec-fairfax.org/client-resources/> for conference room descriptions.

Clients are allowed the following complimentary conference room usage:

- Resident offices: 4 hours/day, no monthly limits
- Shared offices: 4 hours/day and no more than 20 hours/month
- Hot Desks: 4 hours/day and no more than 15 hours/month
- Virtual: 4 hours/day and no more than 10 hours/month

Clients will be charged for any additional use beyond their complimentary allotments. Contact the front office for usage rates.

### Conference Room Usage Rules

- Tentative Meeting dates will be held for two weeks only.
- Set-up and take-down services are not available. The individual reserving the room is responsible for making arrangements.
- A room may not be scheduled for a single meeting greater than 24 hours.
- Recurring meetings may not be scheduled for more than 30 days.

- All meeting requests must include a subject that clearly defines the purpose of the meeting. The scheduler's name and contact information must also be included in the body of the request.
- Use only whiteboard-approved markers.
- Place all trash in receptacles, clean whiteboards, return furniture to set placing.
- On occasion, Clients may find it in their best interest to host public events such as news conferences and/or visiting dignitaries which would involve large crowds. When planning these events, Clients must provide MEC-Fairfax with written advance notice at least seven (7) business days prior to the event. The notice should indicate the date, time, location, and nature of the event as well as an estimate of the crowd size.

## Conference Room Locations

- **First Floor**
  - Conference Center A – 122A (maximum seated occupancy: 35 people)
  - Conference Center B – 122B (maximum seated occupancy: 22 people)
- **Second Floor**
  - Conference Room 1 (maximum occupancy: 6 people)
  - Conference Room 2 (maximum occupancy: 5 people)
  - Conference Room 3 (maximum occupancy: 4 people)
  - Conference Room 4 (maximum occupancy: 4 people)
  - Conference Room 5 (maximum occupancy: 12 people)
- **Third Floor**
  - Conference Room 6 (maximum occupancy: 4 people)
  - Conference Room 7 (maximum occupancy: 8 people)
- **Fourth Floor**
  - Conference Room 8 (maximum occupancy: 8 people)
  - Conference Room 9 (maximum occupancy: 6 people)
  - Conference Room 10 (maximum occupancy: 12 people)
  - Conference Room 11 (maximum occupancy: 10 people)

## CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- As a client of the MEC-Fairfax, it is important for you to recognize that if you violate the rules described in this Handbook, you can face a variety of consequences as determined by the MEC Director, including being terminated as a client. This is in addition to the provisions of the Lease Agreement. Also, please be aware that this Handbook shall not be deemed to give additional rights or privileges to the client over those already described in the Lease Agreement.
- The MEC and its staff will make their best efforts to support your business and provide the services outlined in your Lease Agreement. By signing below, you agree that nothing contained in the Handbook should be deemed to constitute nor be construed or implied to create the relationship of principal and agent, partnership, joint venture, or any other relationship between client and MEC-Fairfax.
- In this regard, although each client will have the benefit of various businesses, financial, technical and management services afforded by MEC, the MEC will not be liable for the advice, depth, extent, quality, and / or quantity of such management, financial, business, and / or technical services afforded to clients through the MEC. Furthermore, such services, and the people and entities providing them, are merely advisory in nature without binding effect on any client. Each MEC client is free to accept or reject such advice and services offered to it; and, each client is responsible for all decisions with respect to its own business, and for all consequences of these decisions.

**LESSEE:**

**[INSERT BUSINESS/CLIENT NAME]**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Title: