



NEW HAMPSHIRE BUSINESS REVIEW

Live Free and Start: lets boost NH's 'entrepreneurial ecosystem'

Website, 'concierge service,' competition aim at giving startups a one-stop shop for assistance

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Published: April 24, 2015

LIVE FREE and *start*[™]

As of today, New Hampshire entrepreneurs have a one-stop shop to assist them in forming and expanding their startups.

LiveFreeandStart.com – piloted by the state's Live Free and Start initiative – walks entrepreneurs through the steps of forming and funding a business, lays out available state resources and maps out incubators in the Granite State.

There's also what the initiative is calling a "concierge service": Any startup looking for advice, connections or solutions can fill out the form under the "Connect" tab, which shoots an email to Liz Gray, director of entrepreneurship for the NH Business Finance Authority.

"The thought behind it is, here, in New Hampshire, you're really only one phone call or email away from a resource to help accelerate your business," says Gray.

"That's where the startup concierge service will step in and provide a rapid response to help those individuals and give them the right connections to the resources we already have here," she says.

The website includes articles on financing a startup, as well as a highlighted innovator of the week, startup success stories – including Dyn's CEO and co-founder Jeremy Hitchcock. There's also a

panel of experts to follow and reach out to, including Alpha Loft CEO Mark Kaplan and Wasabi Ventures' Tom "TK" Kuegler.

"We wanted to be different from your typical website with pages full of links. We wanted to provide critical resources that entrepreneurs need," says Gray.

Manchester-based Grapevine Marketing designed the website and will carry out the social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Manchester-based PR firm Montagne Communications is also helping promote the website and a new startup competition, Ultimate NH Connection.

The competition encourages New Hampshire-based startups in existence for less than three years and with less than \$200,000 in 2015 revenue to submit an application on the website by May 15. The winner, selected in early June, will receive an hour-long meeting with Gov. Maggie Hassan, members of the Live Free and Start Advisory Council and hand-selected tech and industry leaders to discuss how to help accelerate growth.

Live Free and Start will reach out to all applicants individually to offer support.

A joint initiative by the governor's office, the BFA and the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, Live Free and Start is aimed at creating jobs and assisting innovation-based companies to start and grow in the state.

"We want to make sure folks know you don't have to be in Boston, you don't have to be in New York, you can be in New Hampshire and have access to resources and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem to help you grow your business," says Gray. "All while enjoying the high quality of life New Hampshire has to offer."

<http://www.nhbr.com/May-1-2015/Live-Free-and-Start-lets-boost-NHs-entrepreneurial-ecosystem/>