

# CROps A SUCCESS STORY



Meet Michelle Prendergast. She is the Executive Director of Ability Center of Virginia, a nonprofit that operates a social enterprise called ArtWorks, selling one-of-a-kind, hand-stamped cards created by individuals with disabilities in Hampton Roads. Michelle turned a 3,000 rubber stamp in-kind donation into a revenue generating business that not only makes money, but provides constituents with an outlet for self-expression.

Michelle enrolled in the CROps program to learn retail operations that could help make ArtWorks a successful business.

“ I can positively say that the class offered by the Center for Retail Excellence was the turning point that propelled our business to the next level. Having the opportunity to learn from area professionals and entrepreneurial peers was inspiring. The supportive and collaborative nature of the course gave me the confidence and know-how needed to pursue opportunities that has led to a growth rate we previously had only dreamed of.”

—Michelle Prendergast, Current Student

H I  
since commencing in 2017

**27+** licenses

have been acquired by new companies enrolled in the CRE

**9** graduate

companies have created 19 new jobs in the community

**11** entrepreneurs'

newly developed business plans vetted

**5** cohort

locations across Hampton Roads



WHETHER YOU ARE STARTING A BUSINESS OR TAKING YOURS TO THE NEXT LEVEL...

Take the next step in a successful business future. Visit [CenterForRetailExcellence.com](http://CenterForRetailExcellence.com) and fill out an application and grow your business.



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The Center for Retail Excellence is a division of the Retail Alliance Foundation, recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR BUSINESS OWNERS  
AFFORDABLE • FLEXI • PRAC I



DO YOU WANT TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

ARE YOU A BUSINESS OWNER LOOKING TO TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

LET'S GET YOU THERE.



“ The Certificate in Retail Operations has been the best thing for my small business. I am more confident about taking Beauty Pop to the next level and seeing my dream become reality. ”

—Shantel Walz, Current Student

“ I can't tell you how many business plans I started in 12 years only to feel like a failure because they never made sense! As I worked through ALL the steps of the business plan... for the first time, I felt like I could accomplish what I always wanted because this class helped me put a PLAN into play. Not the get up and see what works best plan... but a real plan based on real working facts. ”

—Tara Tyler, Former Student & 12-Year Business Owner



## Successful businesses are built with careful thought and planning.

**Starting or maintaining a business is challenging** under the best of circumstances. But, for many retailers, the demands of running their business can get overwhelming. Fortunately, the Retail Alliance Foundation has resources that can help. One of those resources is its Center for Retail Excellence (CRE). The CRE offers classes and mentoring to assist **aspiring** and **existing** retailers in operating their businesses successfully.

Completely practical, our lessons help new business owners figure out hard problems like cash flow, balance sheets, merchandise management and lease agreements—all things business owners struggle with daily.

### What you get out of the program:

- Produce a comprehensive business plan
- Establish professional network for future information, support and motivation
- Develop a basic “toolbox” with which to face the challenges of operating a successful retail business

Retail organizations come in a variety of forms and sizes. **We describe them as the last hand-off of any product or service to the end user.** They deliver to customers everything from lawn mowers, to art, to insurance, to clothing, to food, to, quite literally, the kitchen sink. Retail offers unique opportunities for people to live out their passions and is one of the most egalitarian industries in our country.

A person can come from any economic, educational, cultural, gender or age group and be a successful retailer. Our courses do not require any educational pre-requisites and are flexible, affordable and deliver a “toolbox” for your business operational success.

AM I A RETAILER?

CROps

Are you ready to start your path to being a small business? Then our flagship course of study, the Certificate in Retail Operations (CROps), is for you.

### CLASSES INCLUDE:

#### Successful Startup

The cornerstone of the Certificate in Retail Operations, introducing participants to the legal and personal demands of running a successful retail business.

#### Retail Accounting

The foundational for budget development and understanding how the Seven Principles work together to form a cohesive whole. Although this class is a discrete topic, the concepts learned will be an integral part of the other five courses.

#### Marketing and Advertising

Understanding the actions and processes, including marketing research and advertising, required to promote a retail business and to bring customers into a retail establishment.

#### Merchandising and Inventory Management

Learn how to effectively plan and promote the sale of their goods and services through appropriate presentation in their retail outlets. Merchandising is differentiated from marketing by focusing on what happens inside a store to complete a sale. Essential to the course is understanding the role of accounting in effective merchandising.

#### HR Management

Explore the appropriate methods of devising formal systems for the management of people—covering three major areas: staffing, employee compensation and benefits, and defining/designating work.

#### Loss Prevention & Security

Develop a set of practices to preserve profit including business activities specifically designed to reduce preventable losses. Areas covered include employee theft, shoplifting, paperwork errors, supplier fraud, and unknown or miscellaneous issues.

#### Business Planning

To allow participants to demonstrate the feasibility of their prospective new business by developing a roadmap for its first several years of operation.

*The classes can be taken individually or as a course of study.*

RUN WITH IT

DOLLARS AND SENSE

MARKETING'S A PITCH

RETAIL E-TAIL & DETAIL

MAY THE WORKFORCE be with YOU

COVER YOUR ASSETS

REALITY BITES

The Certificate is a

**42-WEEK PROGRAM**

earned by completing **SEVEN CLASSES** each only six weeks in length that covers what we call the **SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF RETAIL OPERATIONS**

**The course is a hybrid model** where some work is done online and other work is done face-to-face in a classroom.

#### Online

- Work at your own pace at a time and place most convenient for you.
- Explore resources and engage in exercises in a virtual classroom monitored by a class facilitator.

#### Face-to-Face

- Approximately every two weeks, you will gather in a more traditional classroom setting to clarify and reinforce the online content.
- Although a facilitator will oversee the classroom, individual classes are taught by subject matter experts.

#### Working Together

- Online and face-to-face elements complement and reinforce each other.
- The facilitator works with a specific cohort (class) for the entire length of the program, providing continuity.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

If you are ready to take the next step in being a small business owner, visit [CenterForRetailExcellence.com](http://CenterForRetailExcellence.com) and fill out an application to take part in the CROps program.