

# WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Prepared by Laura Qualey  
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## Why Communities Invest in Economic Development



### Economic Developers Support Successful Businesses through:

- Connection to Resources & Capital
- Problem Solving
- Marketing the Community as a Great Place to Invest & Do Business
- Navigating the System
- Community & Economic Revitalization
- Site Development
- Strategies for Business & the Community

### Successful Businesses Provide:

- Local Tax Revenue
- Employees in the Community
- Stronger Social Fabric
  - supporting the community
  - being part of the community culture
- Growth Potential for Residents

### Business Tax Revenue Supports these Community Assets:

- Public Employees
- Quality of Life
- Parks & Amenities
- Roads & Infrastructure
- Public Safety
- Housing Funding

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## Benefits of Economic Development Include:

- Maintain, increase, & diversify tax base
- Increase revenues faster than cost of municipal services increase
- Economic vitality and diversification for commercial and industrial areas
- Maximize property through highest & best use
- Create and retain jobs, increase per capita income
- Self-sufficiency in the face of state and federal budget issues
- Recognition of local products
- Beneficial partnerships between local governments, businesses, & community members

## What Does an Economic Developer Do?

Economic Developers are a catalyst to establish relationships, build networks, and generate resources to meet the needs of businesses. Their goal is to increase economic viability in their community by:

- Business Retention & Expansion
  - Business Creation
  - Business Attraction
  - Networking Existing Business
  - Conducting Business Visitations
  - Attending Meetings with Stakeholders
  - Administering and Managing Revolving Loans
  - Implementing Business Recognition Programs
  - Researching or Conducting Targeted Industry Studies, Labor Market Surveys
  - Creating and Implementing Marketing Strategies
  - Assessing the Community and Creating a Profile
  - Tracking Vacant Industrial Site & Facilities Inventory
  - Holding Business Familiarization Tours for Potential New Businesses
  - Researching Tax Incentives & Financing Options
  - Land use and sustainable housing growth
  - Social, recreational, arts and cultural development
  - Assess Child Care gaps and the relation to workforce
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## What Role Does an Economic Developer Play in the Community?

The role of today's economic developer evolves continuously. An economic developer is responsible for planning, designing, and implementing economic development strategies, as well as acting as a key liaison between public and private sectors and the community.

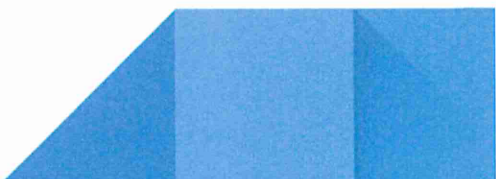
Economic developers are also instrumental in helping to leverage finances from both the public and private sectors—funding that is critical to help communities attract new businesses, facilitate enterprise development, and assist existing businesses with expansion and troubleshooting.

Economic developers are key facilitators in creating public-private partnerships and coordinating activities and communications between different agencies, territories, and actors. It is their job to bring the different actors to the bargaining table, gather resources, mediate and match buyers with suppliers, and facilitate business partnerships.

It is also imperative that economic developers fill in the gaps and provide assistance where markets and institutions cannot or will not meet the community's needs. This points to another role economic developers play which is that of information providers. They offer accurate, up-to-date, and credible information to prospects interested in investing, locating, or expanding in a specific area. They also provide information on the community needed by local industries and the private and public sectors.

In addition to all of these roles, an economic developer may provide technical or trade assistance—or even make loans to area businesses via the Revolving Loan Fund. Most importantly, though, they must be keen analysts, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy. They are responsible for monitoring and assessing the economy and the local business climate in order to be proactive and perform effectively.

While the role of an economic development agency is multi-faceted, like the profession, it is also continually evolving. However, keep in mind that not every organization will take on every role. The activities and services provided by each organization are dependent upon the unique needs of each community.



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## Who Are Key Partners with Economic Developers?

- Local Elected Officials
- State Legislators
- County Commissioners
- Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Bureaus
- Utility Companies
- Housing Authorities
- Department of Employment & Economic Development
- Business Owners/Entrepreneurs
- School District
- Transportation Services
- Real Estate Agents/Developers
- Land Owners
- Community Members
- Other Economic Developers
- Local economic development organization representatives
- Leaders within the business community
- Non-profit agencies
- Local churches or places of worship
- Local or regional workforce development office



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## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range planning document, typically 20-25 years and is an expression of the community's vision for the future and a strategic map to reach that vision. However, changing conditions require that they be reviewed at least every five years to check for a need to update.



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## Why should a community have a comprehensive plan?

- Allows a community to be proactive (vs. reactive) to issues and changes that arise over time.
- Allows the community to identify factors influencing and shaping the community, and consider how competing interests can be balanced.
- Provides guidance for orderly growth, development and the physical appearance of the community.
- Provides an opportunity to think regionally, especially regarding growth, utilities, community services and transportation.
- Sets up the community for grant funding success, by clarifying needs and demonstrating public support for certain projects or improvements.
- Serves as a guide to orient decisions over time, no matter if there is turnover in leadership, council and/or staff. This provides for stability and predictability.
- Builds consensus and commitment for elected officials and provides guidance for future decision-making.

