

A Guide to Economic Development

For Local Officials

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ACCG Economic Development Resource Guide

Objective: *To provide a database of resources for use by those interested in promoting economic development in counties.*

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Introduction

So you're interested in economic development? Here are some general tips to help you get started:

1. Get to know your regional representatives in the Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Economic Development as soon as possible. These individuals promote economic development for a living, and are familiar with current efforts and resources around the state.
2. Establish positive relationships with your development authority and local chamber of commerce. They have a vested interest in your community's development, and can be a valuable partner.
3. Attend training programs on the subject. Interactive training sessions are usually much more effective than reading an email or newsletter, so immerse yourself in an interactive experience. Several suggestions are found below.
4. Most importantly, remember to work together! Significant economic development is nearly impossible if acting alone; successful development requires balancing and cooperating with many different agencies, businesses, and individuals in your county.

Want to learn about economic development?

- *Certified Commissioners Training Program – Economic Development Course*

This course, which is part of the Certified Commissioners Training Program curriculum, provides an overview of the economic development process. It includes information on Georgia's economic development strategy and legislative initiatives, best practices and more. Topics such as community development building blocks, business development strategies, building regional partnerships and the role of leadership in economic development are covered.

<http://www.cviog.uga.edu/training/local/commissioners.php>

- *Georgia Academy for Economic Development*

The Georgia Academy provides a one day and a five day training course that builds on the information provided in the Certified Commissioners Training Program course, though you can attend without having participated in the commissioners' course. The Academy's multi-day regional program provides participants with an understanding of the complexities of economic and community development, and tools to assist in the development of their region. The program, through a variety of defined activities, takes an in-depth review of possible economic development opportunities and strategies. The multi-day program takes place over a four-month period, including five days of instruction combining lecture, exercises, guest expert presentations, and other forms to keep the program interesting and interactive. It is also a good way to get to know people interested in economic development in your area.

<http://www.georgiaacademy.org/>

- *Development Authority Board Member Training*

Based at the University of Georgia, the Fanning Institute offers basic and advanced development authority board member training. While targeted to board members, the material is useful for elected officials, professional staff and others. The basic course covers the role of development authorities, how they work, and an overview of economic development in Georgia. The Advanced Topics class covers deal making, legal issues, project case studies, and interactions between development authorities and local government.

www.fanning.uga.edu

You can order the *Development Authority Board Member Handbook* by visiting:
<http://www.fanning.uga.edu/files/publications/orderforms/DevAuthorityBookOrderForm.pdf>

- *Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA)*

Enhance your network and knowledge by becoming a member of GEDA. The association is made up of more than 900 economic developers, chamber staff, local government officials and others from throughout Georgia. GEDA meets most months of the year to provide and promote networking and professional development opportunities related to economic development.

<http://www.geda.org/>

The Basics – Agencies and organizations committed to Economic Development

- *Georgia Department of Economic Development (DEcD)*

DEcD is the government portal for promoting economic development in Georgia. They work with business prospects from around the world encouraging and helping them to locate in Georgia. They also assist businesses expand and remain in the state. For local governments, DEcD provides real-time support and helps to harness the resources of any community. The department offers online resources, training programs and information in all categories of assistance, including but not limited to transportation, tourism, science and technology, education, workforce, business and government. Its staff of business development and industry experts provide timely and useful information to help your community achieve its goals.

www.georgia.gov

- *Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)*

DCA operates a host of state and federal grant programs, serves as the state's lead agency in housing finance and development, and provides comprehensive planning, technical and research assistance to local governments. DCA can help you get started in evaluating your options when it comes to economic development. Further, the department coordinates a variety of economic incentives and tools, tax credits, and financing plans. DCA can explain sustainable development and provide tools for local governments to use in planning and quality growth, construction code development, and more.

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/>

View the department's resource book to economic development financing programs at <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/TaxCredits/programs/financingPacket.asp>

- *Local Chambers of Commerce*

Local chambers, as primary representatives and advocates of commercial growth, can offer up a wealth of information concerning economic development. In many cases, local chambers maintain databases of government information and are a useful tool in learning about the particular aspects of economic development in your area. Additionally, many chambers regularly hold informational sessions and produce materials on topical questions appropriate to their county or city.

<http://www.gacce.org/>

- *County Economic Development Offices and Development Authorities*

Get to know your county development authority or economic development office. They should be able to give you a comprehensive look at your county's current and past efforts to encourage economic development, including targeted industries, infrastructure capabilities and more. Long-term planning designs for your district are also usually available; these plans can help to define your economic development goals.

The Money – Resources for Economic Development Financing

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GEdD) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) can help you access and leverage available economic development funds. In addition, the following resources may be available to assist your community:

- *Business Expansion Support Act of 1994 (BEST)*

The BEST Act of 1994 is a measure designed to provide tax credits/incentives to [companies locating or expanding in Georgia](#). BEST provides [income tax credits for job creation](#) for certain businesses or headquarters; [investment tax credits](#) for manufacturing or telecommunications facilities; [retraining credits](#) which enable some employers to claim certain costs of retraining employees in new technology or operating systems; [child care credits](#) for employers who provide childcare services, and many others. The Act also [allows](#) exemptions for some Sales and Use taxes for various kinds of manufacturing machinery; computer sales; primary materials handling; and electricity sales.

http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/TaxCredits/programs/downloads/summaryTC_Best2006.pdf

- *One Georgia*

OneGeorgia funds consist of a portion of the state's tobacco settlement monies and are used to assist the most economically challenged areas of Georgia. One such aid is the AirGeorgia Fund, which provides grants to integrate airport infrastructure developments into overall plans for economic development, while the EDGE Fund is utilized when a rural Georgia community competes for business with another community outside the state. The Strategic Industries Loan Fund provides loan assistance to applicants being considered for development of a Georgia strategic industry. These are only a few of the available resources, and many other useful funds exist.

Further information is available at
<http://www.onegeorgia.org/>

- *Grants.gov*

This site is devoted to grant opportunities from 26 federal government agencies. More than 1,000 grant opportunities are available in categories ranging from agriculture to transportation. In addition to grant opportunities, the site allows one to directly apply for these grants. In order to find grants, searches can be conducted based on eligibility requirements and the categories of interest to your county. Grants.gov also offers a free e-mail notification program to send notices when any grant is posted that meets user-given criteria.

<http://www.grants.gov/>

- *Georgia Department of Revenue*

The Department of Revenue can be a useful portal for information on available financial incentives. The site contains all necessary forms related to filing, information on existing tax credits, and multiple publications relating to various areas of economic development, including but not limited to: small business, alcohol and tobacco, property taxes, corporate, and more.

<http://www.dor.ga.gov/>

Workforce Development

- *Governor's Office of Workforce Development*

As its name indicates, this office works to promote workforce development and achieve higher levels of employee competence, education, and success. In particular, this office coordinates Workforce Development Initiatives, which are the statewide efforts to promote economic development and cooperation. Some of these include the Governor's Discretionary Fund Projects, Georgia's Work Ready Initiative, WIA Incentive Grant, and others. In addition, the office can also direct those interested to local workforce area information and local workforce investment boards.

www.gowfd.org/

- *Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE)*

The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, which encompasses the Technical College System of Georgia, oversees the state's system of technical colleges, the adult literacy program, and a host of economic and workforce development programs. They offer information on all of Georgia's technical colleges, how to successfully pursue a degree, and how best to utilize such a degree. Support and technical services are also available, whether that is for instruction, faculty development or special workforce needs.

<http://www.dtae.org/>

- *Georgia Quick Start*

This program provides high-quality training services at no cost to new or expanding businesses in Georgia. A unit of DTAE, Quick Start works with several other government agencies to enhance worker productivity by providing training services and enhancing the value of Georgia workers. It also has helpful connections to Georgia's network of technical colleges and service industries, enabling quick and easy research.

www.georgiaquickstart.org

- *Georgia Department of Education*

GADOE's Division of Professional Learning provides leadership, technical assistance, resources and consultative services to the Georgia education community in order to improve student learning through organizational development and professional learning. Various avenues of information are available, ranging from professional learning methods to Regional Educational Service Agencies, which are groups dedicated to improving the effectiveness of educational programs and services.

<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/index.aspx>

- *Georgia Department of Labor*

The Department of Labor assists job seekers, employers, and workforce professionals in an effort to create a healthy and vibrant economic community. Consumers can find industry data, access labor force and unemployment statistics, and obtain career guidance information, education and training opportunities, and workforce trends. The site also contains information on the Workforce Investment Act and Services, which helps to plan and develop Georgia's overall workforce system.

<http://www.dol.state.ga.us/>

- *Georgia's Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP)*

ICAPP is the University System of Georgia's economic development program. ICAPP connects the intellectual resources of Georgia's 35 public college and universities to the state's business community by linking business to potential employees, giving business or development advice, distributing recent research, and providing links to other programs such as Georgia Hire and the Georgia Research Alliance.

www.icapp.org

- *GeorgiaHire*

Allows business to recruit and hire students and alumni from more than 90 Georgia colleges and universities. GeorgiaHire provides a resume bank with student information and provides access to this resource to businesses seeking new employees. GeorgiaHire displays lists of participating campuses and industries, and also supports the MonsterTRAK employment program.

www.georgiahire.com

Community Development

- *Georgia Power – Georgia Resource Center*

Georgia Power is committed to providing economic development resources for local governments and industries. Among its many tools is a land and building search which enables potential business prospects to find ideal locations for new or expanding operations. Georgia Power's community development department works hand-in-hand with businesses to attract them to Georgia, and is willing and able to facilitate strategic planning at the local level and provide many insights to those seeking to learn more about economic development.

<http://www.georgiapower.com/grc/>

- *Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute (EII)*

EII's goal is to help counties improve economic prosperity. They provide multiple types of assistance, including strategic assessments, strategic plans, evaluation of organizational structure, quality growth and planning, technology, and public policy. The focus of this assistance is on (1) developing and delivering practical, knowledge-based solutions to communities and regions throughout the state, (2) transferring knowledge to serve as a catalyst for community and regional innovation, (3) helping communities develop or enrich their "quality of place" for businesses and citizens, and (4) connecting community leaders to the wealth of resources available at Georgia Tech.

www.edi.gatech.edu/

- *Georgia Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia (TDAG)*

TDAG's stated purpose is to increase awareness of the tourism industry as an economic development engine. To that end, it provides information on recent tourism industry news, developments in tourism taxes, and multiple links to tourism centers. TDAG also hosts educational forums and information sessions for interested people. It also partners with the Governor's office to annually offer the Governor's Tourism Conference.

<http://www.tourismdevelopmentalliance.org/>

Small Business –Helping entrepreneurs in your county

- *University of Georgia Small Business Development Center-*

SBDC provides business consulting and continuing education opportunities to Georgia's entrepreneurs. The Center contains information on health insurance options for Small Businesses, Points of Contact, Economic Development Finance Programs, Business Startup Basics, and a plethora of tax-related 'how to' documents. SBDC also offers small business training classes, FAQs for new businesses, and a local page of links to other small business resources.

www.sbdc.uga.edu/

- *SCORE-*

"Counselors to America's Small Business," SCORE is a source of free, confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. SCORE's counselors have developed a 'template gallery' designed to help small businesses plan for the future, while toolkits and classes ensure that business owners are properly equipped for all future ventures.

<http://www.score.org/>

- *Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC)*

ATDC is a nationally recognized science and technology incubator that helps Georgia entrepreneurs launch and build successful companies by providing practical business advice and assistance. Services include linking businesses with investors and customers, practical business consulting, networking options throughout their members-only organization, and offering startup facilities in several Georgia cities to small businesses.

www.atdc.org

- *Georgia Statewide Minority Business Enterprise Center-*

The center provides business and technical assistance that helps emerging and existing minority businesses experience significant growth and sustainability, while also enhancing long-term economic impact through the creation of jobs and revenue.

<http://www.edi.gatech.edu/gmbdc>

- *Georgia Entrepreneurs and Small Business Office*

This office works to enhance and improve knowledge and access to entrepreneur and small business resources. Under this umbrella are programs such as the Georgia Entrepreneurs and Small Business Coordinating Network, Governor's Mentor Protégé Program, the "Entrepreneurial Friendly County" program, of which 50 Georgia counties are currently members, and the Small Business Regulatory Reform Initiative. The office also provides a wealth of information resources ranging topically from agricultural small business development to teen small businesses to historic preservation.

<http://www.georgia.org/Business/SmallBusiness/>