

# 2018 Connecticut Local Economic Development Organization Survey Report

February 2019



## About this report

This survey was developed by the University of Connecticut Department of Extension in partnership with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and the Connecticut Economic Research Center (CERC). Uconn Extension intern Hope Frew provided valuable analysis support for this project. For more information contact: Laura Brown, University of Connecticut, [laura.brown@uconn.edu](mailto:laura.brown@uconn.edu)



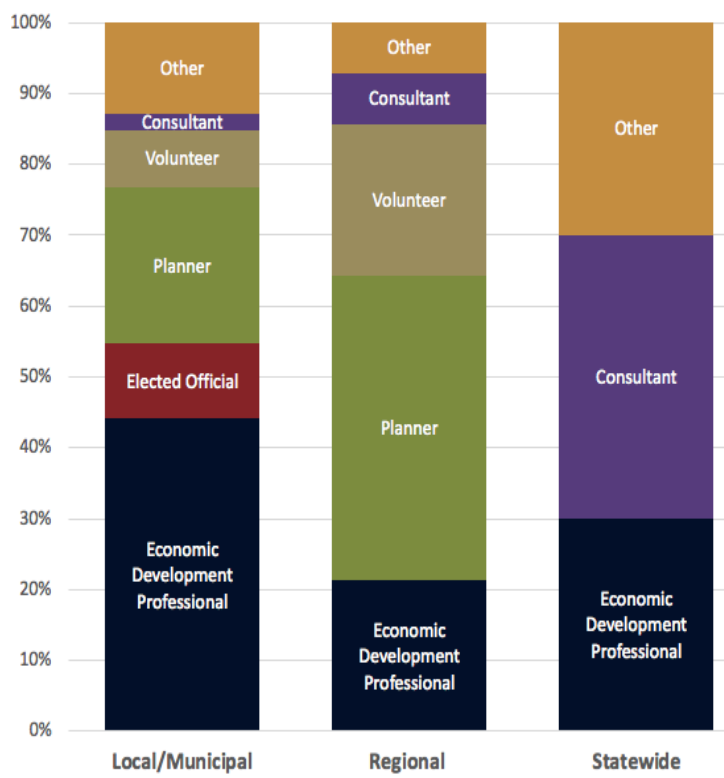
## Background

The purpose of the Connecticut Local Economic Development Organization Survey is to understand who is involved in economic development activities in Connecticut and how economic development strategies are conducted at the local level over time. This information may be used by municipalities, local elected officials, and resource providers to support economic development programs that are most effective and relevant to communities across the state. The survey was assessed as a Qualtrics online questionnaire in February, 2018 with a response period of three weeks. A link to access the questionnaire was disseminated through the Connecticut Economic Development Association and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities list serves as well as the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association and personal distribution lists of coordinating partners. The survey included 28 questions regarding the structure and organization of economic development functions, investments made in economic development, economic development programs and strategies and how are they evaluated, and demographic information about economic development staff. A copy of the survey tool is available upon request and as an appendix to this report. This project was reviewed by the University of Connecticut IRB and was determined to not qualify as human subjects research under 45CFR46.102. Significant findings are highlight in bold in the text below.

## Respondents

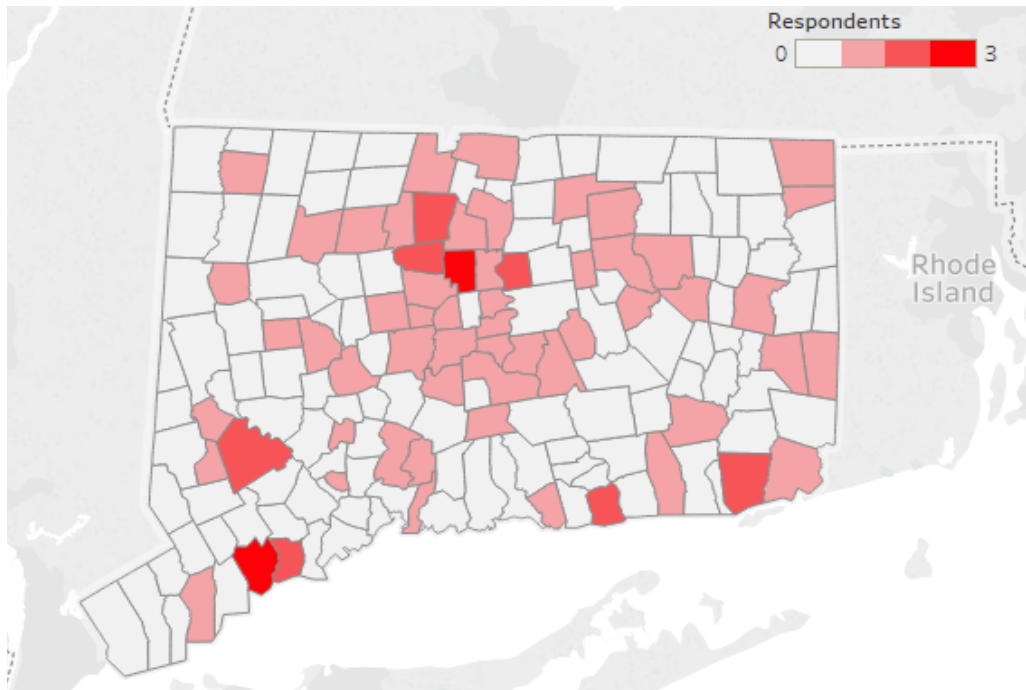
Anyone involved in economic development activities for any municipality in Connecticut state was invited to complete the survey. Of the 110 respondents to the survey, 62 (53%) responded to all questions. Other respondents were partial but are included in this analysis. Respondents represent 61 unique cities and towns; 36% of Connecticut’s 169 municipalities. Forty percent of respondents (44) were Economic Development Professionals, 22.7% (25) Planners, 8.2% Elected Officials, 9.1 % Volunteers, and 6.4% were Consultants. Another 13.6% reported participating in economic development in another capacity which included economic development commission members, town managers, researchers, non-profit staff, and lenders.

Chart 1. Respondent Position by Geography  
Percent of Total (n=110)



The majority of respondents were involved with economic development at the Local /Municipal level, 78.2% (86) , 12.7% (14) were Regional, and 9.1% (10) Statewide.

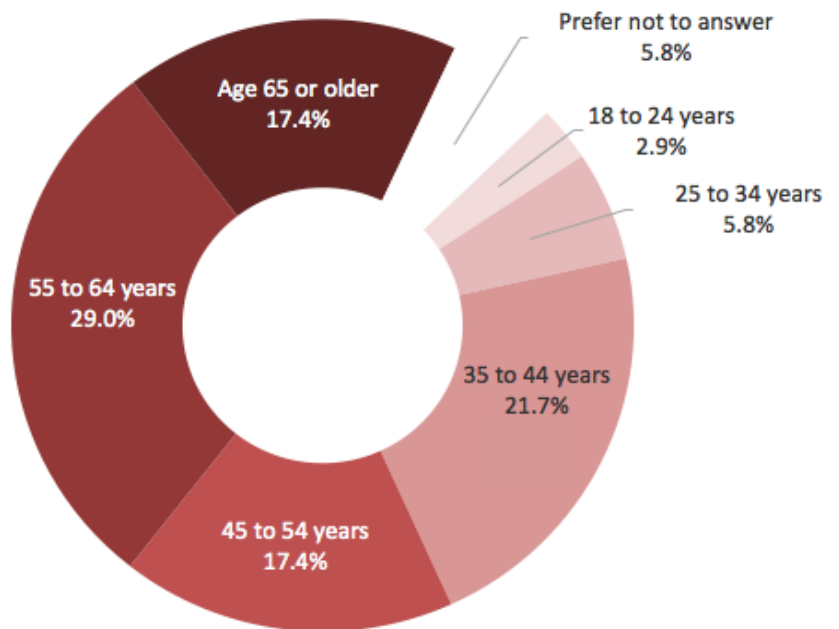
Chart 2. Respondent Frequency by Municipality (n=86)



**The majority of respondents, 64%, were over age 45 and had significant experience in economic development.** A

surprising 17% (12) were over the age of 65. Only 6 respondents reported being 34 years old or younger. Respondents also reported having significant experience in the field with an average of 14.3 years of experience, a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 35 years. The aging of Connecticut’s economic development community means many communities may experience changes as these professionals retire. Their extensive experience may present opportunities for mentorship or internship programs for younger professionals.

Chart 3. Age of Respondents (n=69)



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**While the gender of respondents was roughly balanced between men and women, there were no respondents who identified as Black, African American, American Indian, or Asian.** Gender was roughly evenly split among respondents with 51.5% identifying as Male, 44.1% as Female and 4.4% preferring not to respond. Most surprisingly, however, is that 91% of the 68 respondents who answered the question regarding race identified as white. Six respondents preferred not to answer but no other respondents identified as any other race. 2.9% of respondents identified as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

## **Structure of Economic Development Organizations**

Eighty six (86) respondents specified working at the Local or Municipal level but fourteen of those respondents did not specify the municipality in which they worked and so were not included in this portion of the analysis leaving 72 responses. Because communities were not asked to select a single respondent, there were multiple respondents from some communities including Avon, Bridgeport, East Hartford, Fairfield, Groton, Newtown, Old Saybrook, Simsbury, and West Hartford. In several cases there were minor discrepancies in the data reported by multiple respondents. These discrepancies included differences in respondent perception of who was primarily responsible for economic development as well as reported numbers of part-time staff, full-time staff and volunteers. Where there were discrepancies among multiple respondents, differences were aggregated into a single response including as much data as possible from each. Aggregation of these duplicates left a total of 61 unique municipal responses.

The discrepancies noted above reflect the likelihood that not all staff or volunteers involved in economic development have a clear idea of the overall management of economic development tasks for the municipality. This is not surprising but speaks to the need for municipalities to ensure that all partners are clear about the expectations and roles for handling economic development concerns.

For this analysis municipalities were broken into four quartiles: populations of <5,000, populations of 5,000-20,000, populations 20,000 - 50,000, and populations greater than 50,000<sup>1</sup>. Throughout this report these communities will also be referred to as Very Small communities, Small communities, Mid-Sized communities and Large communities, based respectively on population size.

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<sup>1</sup> Backus, K, Mueller, LM (2017) Town-level Population Estimates for Connecticut, 2016, Connecticut Department of Public Health, Health Statistics and Surveillance, Statistics Analysis & Reporting, Hartford, CT.

Table 1. Organizational Staffing by Municipality Size

Population Quartile	Number of Municipalities	% of all Respondents	Avg # Full-time Staff	Avg # Part-time Staff	Avg # Volunteers
TOTAL	61	100.0	4.3	1.8	7.0
< 5,000	6	9.8	0.0	0.5	3.0
5,000-20,000	29	47.5	4.2	2.5	6.2
20,000-50,000	15	24.6	5.0	1.4	9.9
>50,000	11	18.0	3.1	1.3	8.0

**Volunteers play a large role in Connecticut’s economic development.** Overall, municipalities averaged 4.3 full-time staff, 1.8 part-time staff, and 7 volunteers responsible for economic development. It is notable that municipalities under a population of 5,000 reported an average of zero full-time staff and 0.5 part-time staff working in economic development.

**Mid-Sized Communities with populations of 20,000-50,000 appear to be the most equipped with economic staff and volunteers.** Connecticut’s largest municipalities with populations over 50,000 reported 3.1 full time staff; less than the 5.0 full-time staff reported for those with populations of 20,000-50,000. While this may be a reporting error given that larger communities may have more departments with discrete economic development functions (and may lack a knowledge of the full-scope of who is involved in responsibilities across the community), this point warrants additional investigation.

**The entity with responsibility for economic development activities varies across Connecticut’s municipalities.** 63.3% of respondents at the municipal level (38) said economic development is primarily the responsibility of an appointed economic development commission. Only one respondent specified that an elected economic development commission was responsible for economic development. However, 35.0 % (21) indicated that other entities were responsible for these functions. Responses included town administrators and the town council, land use staff, and other hired consultants and staff such as those funded in partnership with the Connecticut Main Street Center.

**The large majority of Connecticut’s responding towns, 80.3% (49) are not served by an economic development corporation.** While it is beyond the scope of this survey to assess the role economic development corporations themselves serve to facilitate development functions, it is likely that towns across the state are meeting these needs in a variety of different ways.

## Budget & Expenditures

Respondents were asked to provide their overall budget for economic development as well as expenditures and revenue by category. There were 54 responses to these questions but 6 of those responses did not specify their municipality so are not included in the analysis by population quartile. This question involved some reporting error as some respondents reported salaries of economic development staff within the budgets and others did not. One response

was removed for clear data entry error. No communities of less than 5,000 in population provided a breakdown of revenue or expenditures so they are not included in this analysis. Budget composition analysis was conducted by combining all budget category totals by municipal size and calculating the percent of the aggregated total in each category.

**Municipalities with populations of 20,000-50,000 appear to have the most robust budgets for economic development.** While budgets in this population quartile ranged widely from \$0 to \$1,000,000, the average budget across all municipalities was \$235,308. Surprisingly communities with populations of 50,000 or greater had a wide range from \$0 to a maximum of \$390,000.

Table 2. Average Budgets for Economic Development by Municipality Size

Population Quartile	Number of Responses	% of all Respondents	Avg Budget	Max Budget	Min Budget
TOTAL	49	100.0	\$131,750		
< 5,000	4	8.2%	\$7,250	\$14,000	\$500
5,000-20,000	19	38.8%	\$38,332	\$140,000	\$0
20,000-50,000	16	32.7%	\$235,308	\$1,000,000	\$22,000
>50,000	10	20.4%	\$193,444	\$390,000	\$0

## Revenues

**Larger municipalities appear to have more diverse budgets** relying more heavily on in-kind and donations and less on local funds. Smaller municipalities reported fewer sponsorships, sponsorships, and federal grants.

**Mid-sized communities of 20,000-50,000 make most use of local funds in their economic development budgets.** Local funds comprise 63% of economic development budget revenue for these communities, compared to 59% of the revenue for smaller communities with populations of 5,000-20,000 and 51% of the budgets in communities with populations over 50,000.

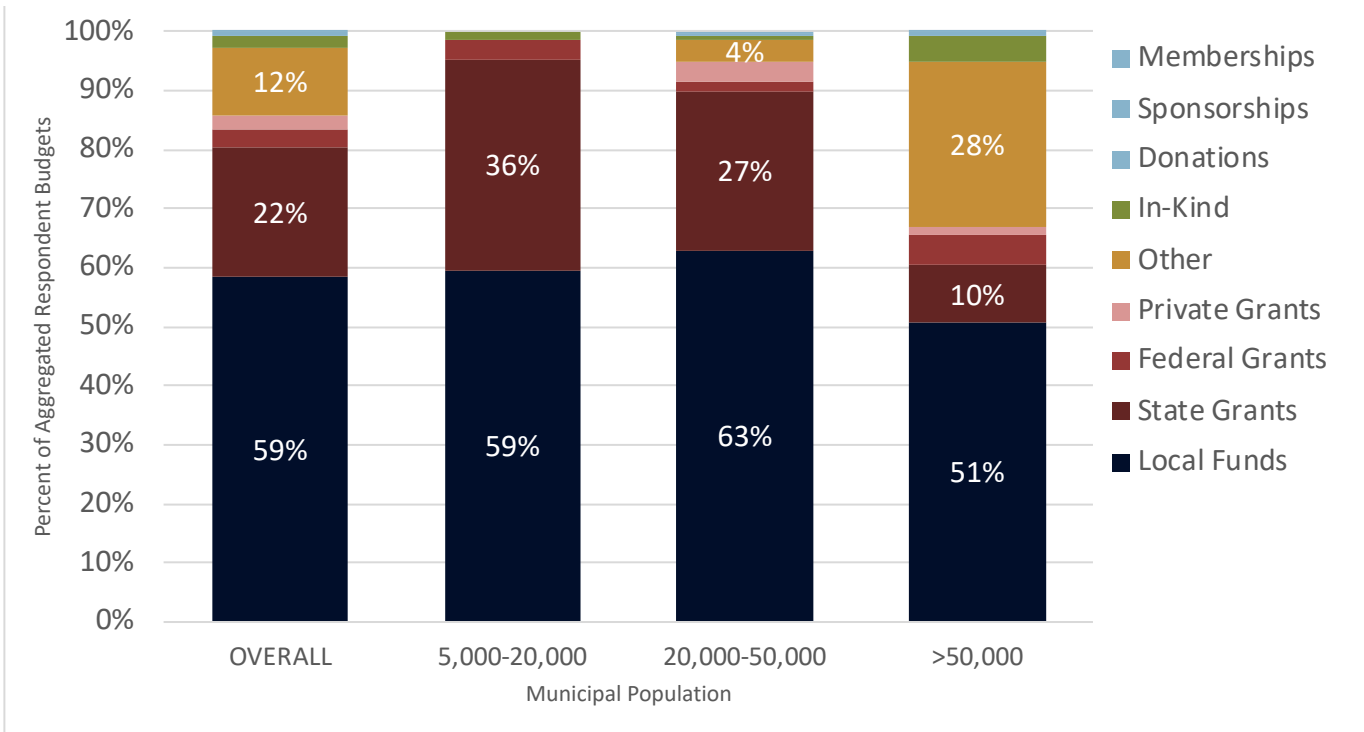
**Small and Mid-sized communities of 5,000-20,000 and 20,000-50,000 reported a greater percentage of their budget comes from state grants than Very small or Large communities** Large communities reported that only 10% of economic development revenue comes from state grants.

Sources of revenue specified as “Other” included special taxes, general funds, and staff time.

Table 3. Composition of Economic Development Revenue Budget by Municipality Size

	State Grants	Federal Grants	Private Grants	Local Funds	Donations	Sponsorships	Memberships	In-Kind	Other
OVERALL	21.77%	3.12%	2.40%	58.60%	0.53%	0.22%	0.00%	1.86%	11.51%
5,000-20,000	35.73%	3.36%	0.00%	59.47%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.44%	0.00%
20,000-50,000	26.77%	1.96%	3.27%	62.93%	0.49%	0.36%	0.00%	0.52%	3.69%
>50,000	9.62%	5.11%	1.44%	50.78%	0.72%	0.03%	0.00%	4.31%	28.00%

Chart 4. Composition of Economic Development Revenue Budget by Municipality Size



Expenditures

Participants were asked to classify their budgets into expense categories.

**Not surprisingly, salaries comprised the greatest expense in budgets of communities of all sizes** ranging from 54% - 73% of the budget total.

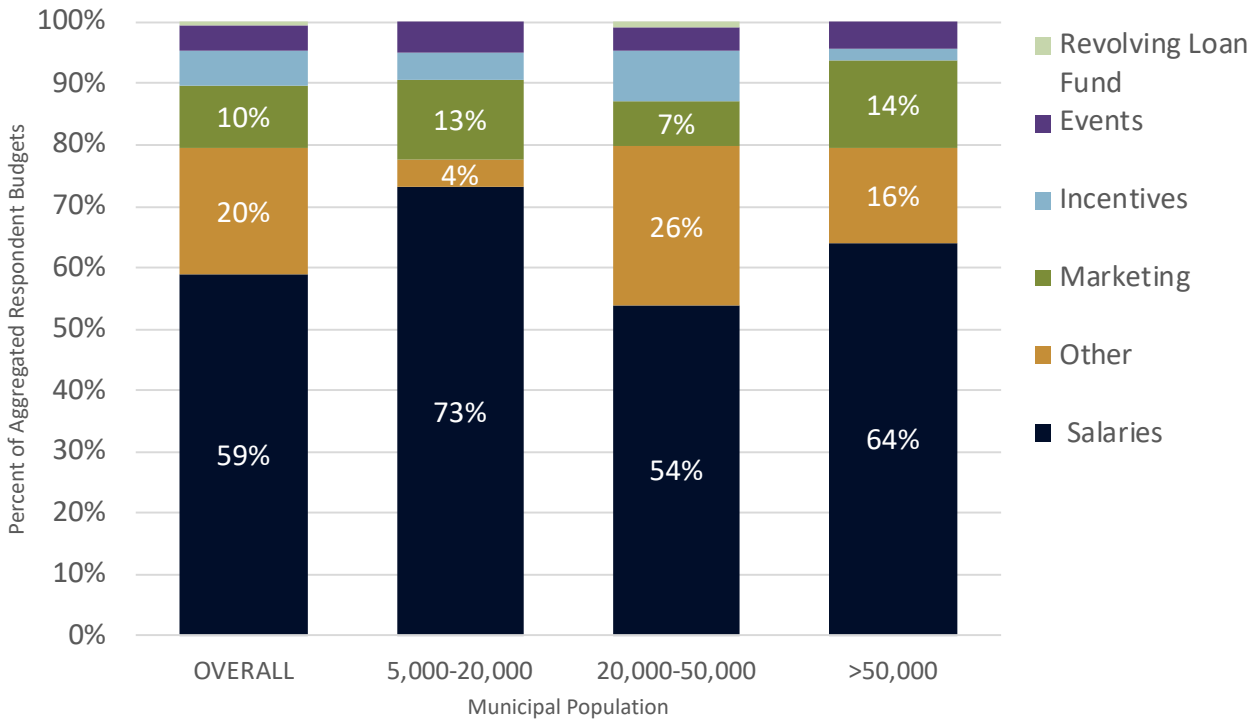
**Variations in strategic approaches to economic development may be reflected in economic development budgets.** Marketing appears to comprise a greater percentage of the budgets of Small (13.1%) and Large communities (14.1%) but less so for Mid-sized communities (7.44%). However, incentives appear to comprise a greater percentage of those Mid-sized community budgets possibly reflecting differences in strategic approaches to economic development in these communities.

Table 4. Composition of Economic Development Expenditure Budget by Municipality

	Salaries	Other	Marketing	Events	Incentives	Revolving Loan Fund
OVERALL	59.05%	20.38%	10.20%	4.06%	5.86%	0.45%
5,000-20,000	73.04%	4.49%	13.11%	5.01%	4.35%	0.00%
20,000-50,000	53.71%	26.04%	7.44%	3.79%	8.24%	0.78%
>50,000	63.90%	15.62%	14.10%	4.22%	2.15%	0.00%

Similar to revenue budgets, larger communities had more a more diverse range of “Other” expenses than smaller communities. Expenses specified as “Other” included business listings, consulting and contractor services, legal fees, non-personal costs, fringe benefits, placemaking initiatives, incentives, operating expenses, grant distribution, dues & memberships, administration, other professional services, and economic development organization memberships.

Chart 5. Composition of Economic Development Expense Budget by Municipality Size



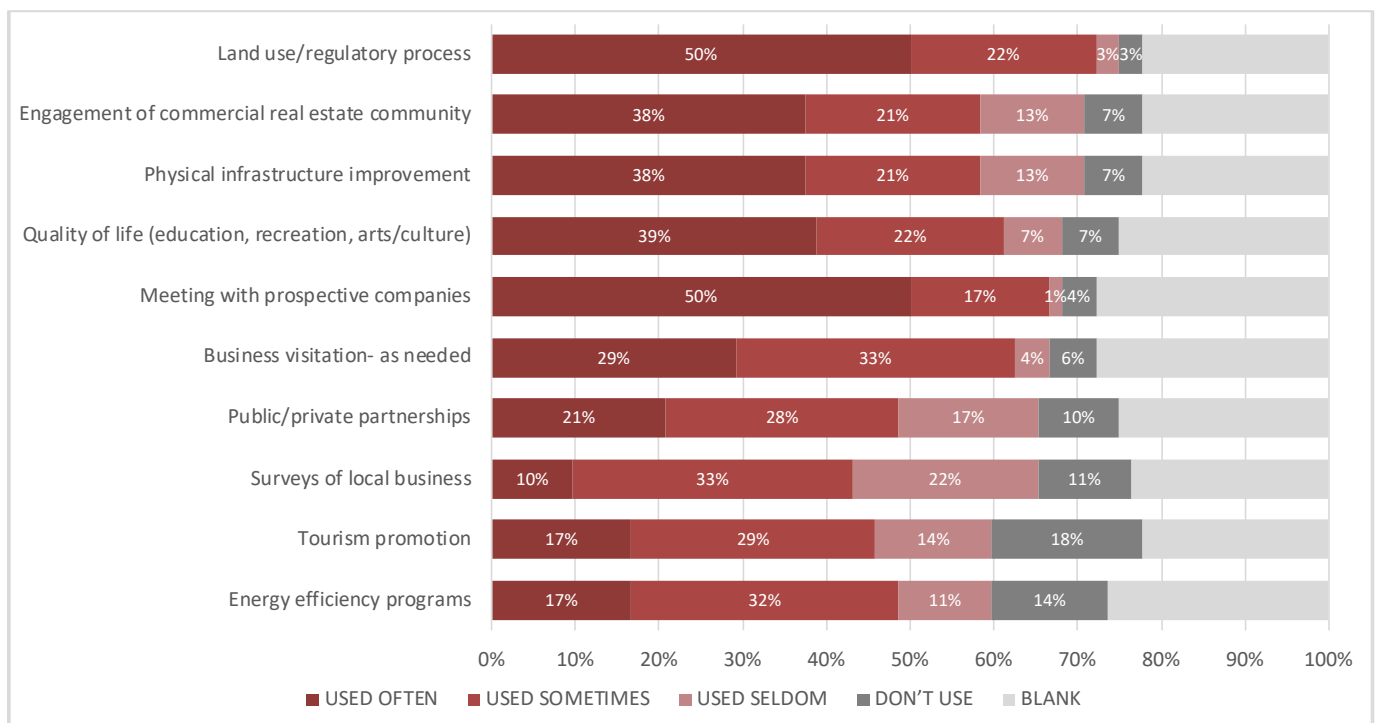


## Strategies and Programs

Respondents were asked to answer a number of questions about what economic development strategies are used in their community in the past year or current year. These questions employed a likert scale including the options “Don’t Use”, “Seldom”, “Sometimes”, and “Often.” Questions were grouped by general category for analysis purposes and categories include: Small Business Support, Business Retention and Expansion, Business Attraction, Community Development and Quality of Life, and Land Use and Infrastructure. Each category also included an “Other” selection allowing respondents to specify other tactics they use and how often they use them. Data reported in this section is an analysis of the 72 responses for which a municipality was specified.

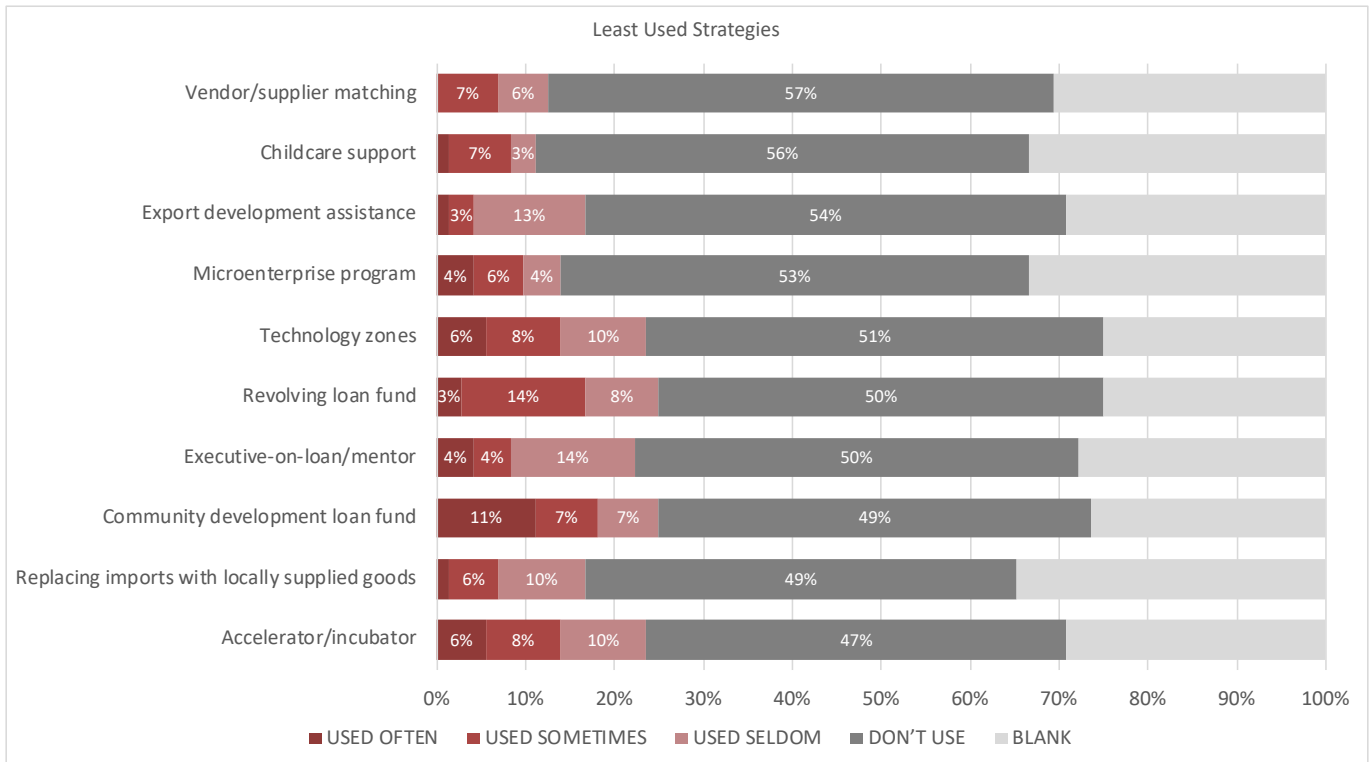
**The three strategies that the greatest percentage of municipal respondents reported using either “Seldom”, “Sometimes” or “Often” are related to land use** including *land use/regulatory process* (used by 75% of all respondents), *engagement of the commercial real estate community* (71% of respondents), and *physical infrastructure improvements* (used by 71% of respondents). Other strategies in the top ten were *quality of life, meeting with prospective companies, business visitation as needed, public/private partnerships, and energy efficiency programs*.

Chart 6. Ten Most Used Economic Development Strategies Across All Municipalities



The least used strategies by municipal respondents were in the area of individual business assistance including *vendor/supplier matching, business assistance, and export development assistance*. Other least used strategies include *microenterprise programs, export development assistance, technology zones, revolving loan funds, executive-on-loan/mentorship programs, community development loan funds, and accelerators/incubators*.

Chart 7. Least Used Economic Development Strategies Across All Municipalities



The strategy data from 72 municipal respondent data was also analyzed by municipality size for Very small (<5,000, n=6), Small (5,000-20,000, n=31), Mid-sized (20,000-50,000, n=18) and Large communities (>50,000, n=17). Very small communities were excluded due to the limited number of responses (6). While an advanced correlative or statistical analysis was beyond the scope of this study, there were some observable differences in used strategies by municipality size. This portion of the analyses does not include frequency of use; only if the strategy was used at all.

Some strategies appear to be used more often by communities of particular sizes and some of were unique to particular community sizes. For instance:

**Respondents from Very small communities noted that they used *local business publicity programs* (50%) and *main street programs* (33.3%) more than other sized communities.**

**Only respondents from Small communities (5,000-20,000) noted the use of *surveys of local businesses* (35.5%). Respondents from Mid-sized communities used *grant management* and respondents from Large communities used *job training/workforce***

**development.** This appears logical given the likelihood that larger communities may be more involved in grant writing and management and play a larger role in local and regional workforce development.

The data also seems to suggest that smaller communities may be investing more in *business retention and expansion* strategies and *tourism promotion*, both of which appear to be used less in larger communities. It is also interesting to note that *quality of life* strategies focused on *education, recreation, arts and culture* appear to be used less by Mid-sized communities.

**Chart 8. Top Ten Strategies Used by Community Size**

Color codes refer to categories of strategies.

Rank	Business Retention & Expansion				Community Development & Quality of Life			
	Land Use & Infrastructure		Business Attraction		Business Attraction		Business Attraction	
	Very Small <5,000		Small 5,000-20,000		Mid-Sized 20,000-50,000		Large >50,000	
		%		%		%		%
1	Education, recreation, arts/culture	66.7%	Public/private partnerships	45.2%	Surveys of local business	94.4%	Business visitation- as needed	70.6%
2	Business visitation- as needed	50.0%	Physical infrastructure improvement	45.2%	Grant management*	94.4%	Housing development	70.6%
3	Surveys of local business	50.0%	Land use/regulatory process	45.2%	Public/private partnerships	94.4%	Education, recreation, arts/culture	70.6%
4	Local business publicity program*	50.0%	Engagement of commercial real estate community	41.9%	Physical infrastructure improvement	94.4%	Public/private partnerships	70.6%
5	Tourism promotion	50.0%	Business visitation- as needed	38.7%	Engagement of commercial real estate community	94.4%	Physical infrastructure improvement	70.6%
6	Land use/regulatory process	50.0%	Meeting with prospective companies	38.7%	Land use/regulatory process	94.4%	Engagement of commercial real estate community	70.6%
7	Business visitation-planned program	33.3%	Surveys of local business*	35.5%	Energy efficiency programs	88.9%	Land use/regulatory process	70.6%
8	Energy efficiency programs	33.3%	Marketing for business attraction	35.5%	Meeting with prospective companies	88.9%	Energy efficiency programs	64.7%
9	Main street program*	33.3%	Education, recreation, arts/culture	35.5%	Marketing for business attraction	88.9%	Meeting with prospective companies	64.7%
10	Meeting with prospective companies	33.3%	Tourism promotion	35.5%	Environmental sustainability- energy audits/green building	88.9%	Job training/workforce development*	64.7%

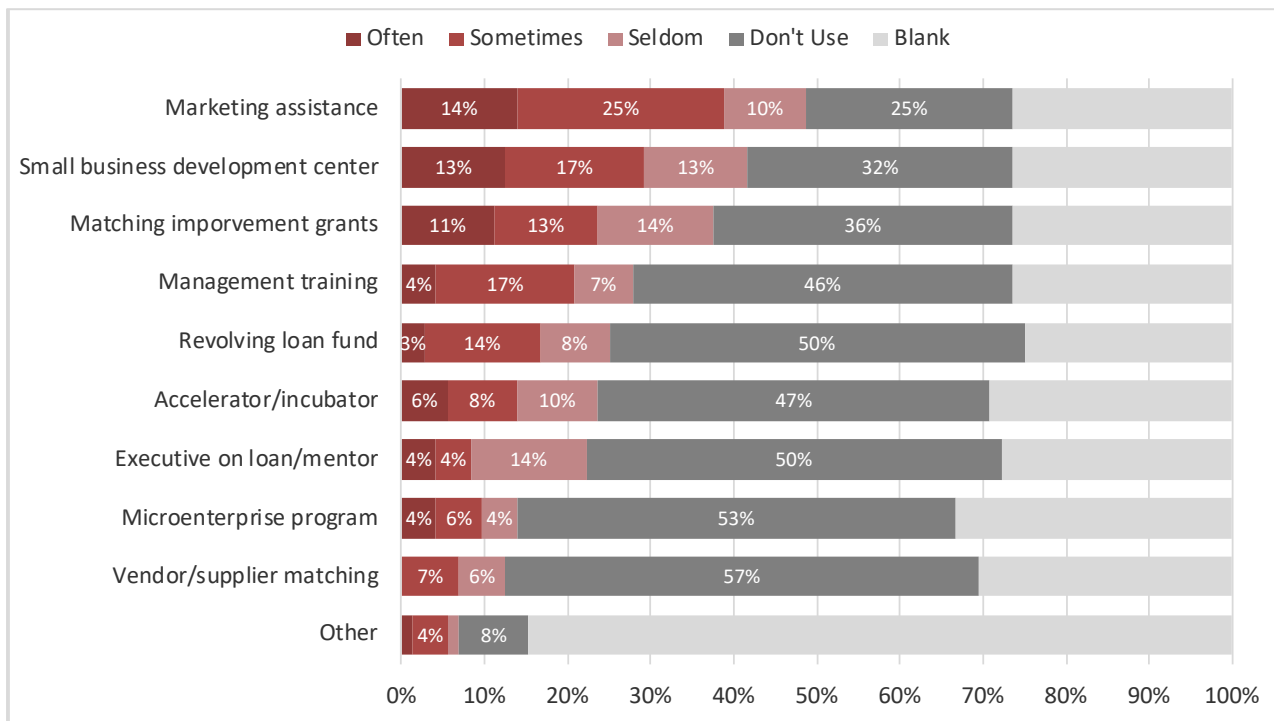
## Small Business Support Strategies

In the area of Small Business Support 49% of respondents reported using *marketing assistance* at all. 42% of respondents reported using the *small business development center*.

Business support strategies including *microenterprise programs* and *vendor supplier matching* were not used by over 50% of respondents.

Ten respondents suggested that they used other strategies and were asked to specify. Responses included tax abatements (2), interns, assessment deferral, CT Main Street Center, Department of Tourism, North West Hills Council of Governments, tax incentives, events, referral to SBDC, Entrepreneurial Center, SBA, HEDCO, SCORE, Local Chamber of Commerce, other technical assistance, and SBA loans.

Chart 9. Small Business Strategies - Frequency of Municipal Respondent Use (n=72)

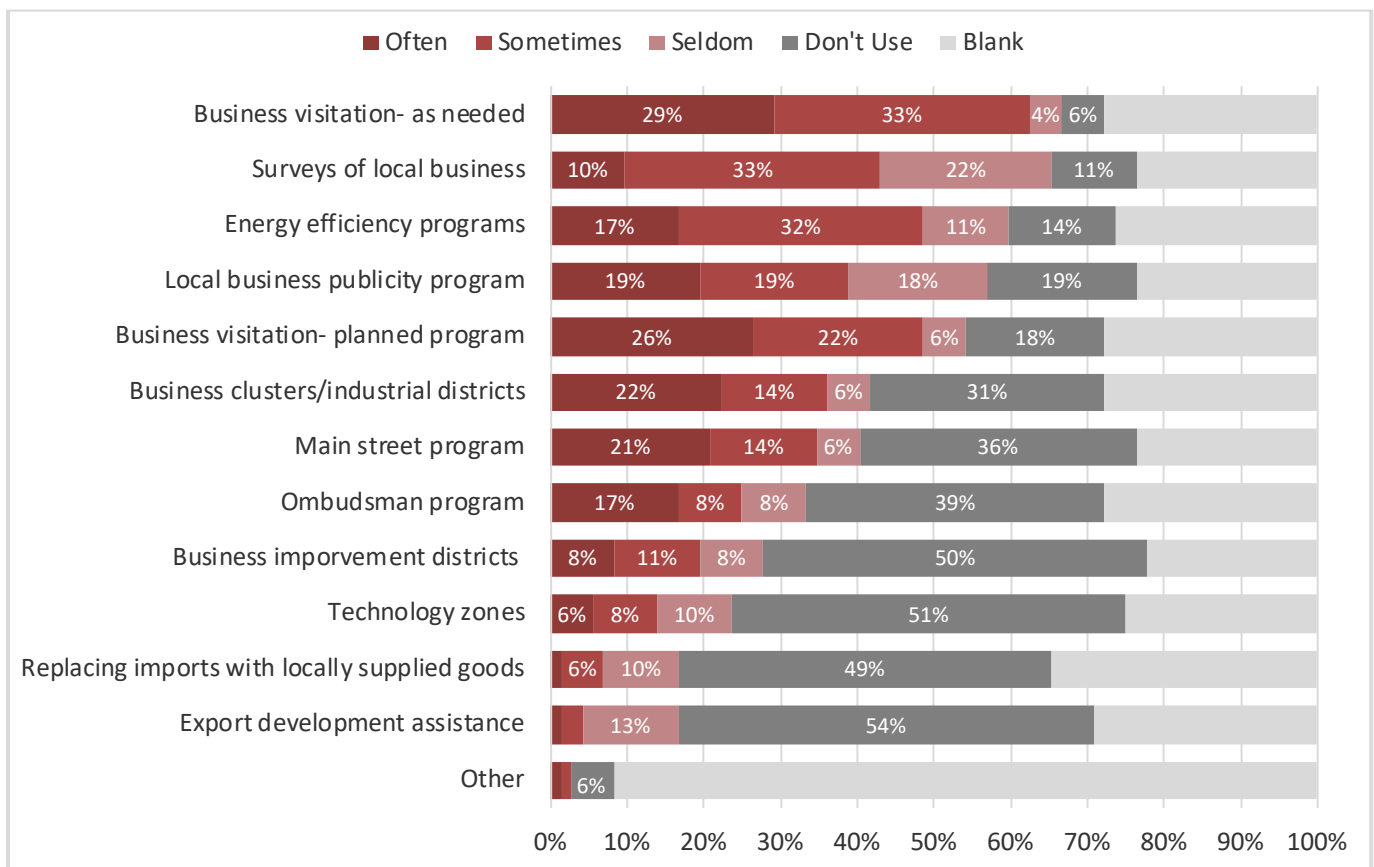


	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Don't Use	Blank	Used at all
Marketing assistance	14%	25%	10%	25%	26%	49%
Small business development cen	13%	17%	13%	32%	26%	42%
Matching improvement grants	11%	13%	14%	36%	26%	38%
Management training	4%	17%	7%	46%	26%	28%
Revolving loan fund	3%	14%	8%	50%	25%	25%
Accelerator/incubator	6%	8%	10%	47%	29%	24%
Executive on loan/mentor	4%	4%	14%	50%	28%	22%
Microenterprise program	4%	6%	4%	53%	33%	14%
Vendor/supplier matching	0%	7%	6%	57%	31%	13%
Other	1%	4%	1%	8%	85%	7%

## Business Retention and Expansion Strategies

Two thirds (67%) of respondents use some form of *business visitation as needed* either “Often,” “Sometimes” or “Seldom.” This was a surprising and hopeful finding, indicating that economic developers responding may have relatively frequent contact with the state’s business community. There is likely to be significant variability in the frequency and nature of business visits but 54% of respondents also indicated that they utilize a *planned business visitation* program. Programs not widely used in the state included *ombudsman programs, technology zones, business improvement districts, export assistance, and local purchasing programs*. Other strategies used included *tax abatement programs, enterprise zone, business directory, regional development programs, and industry targeted funding*.

Chart 10. Business Retention and Expansion Strategies - Frequency of Municipal Respondent Use (n=72)

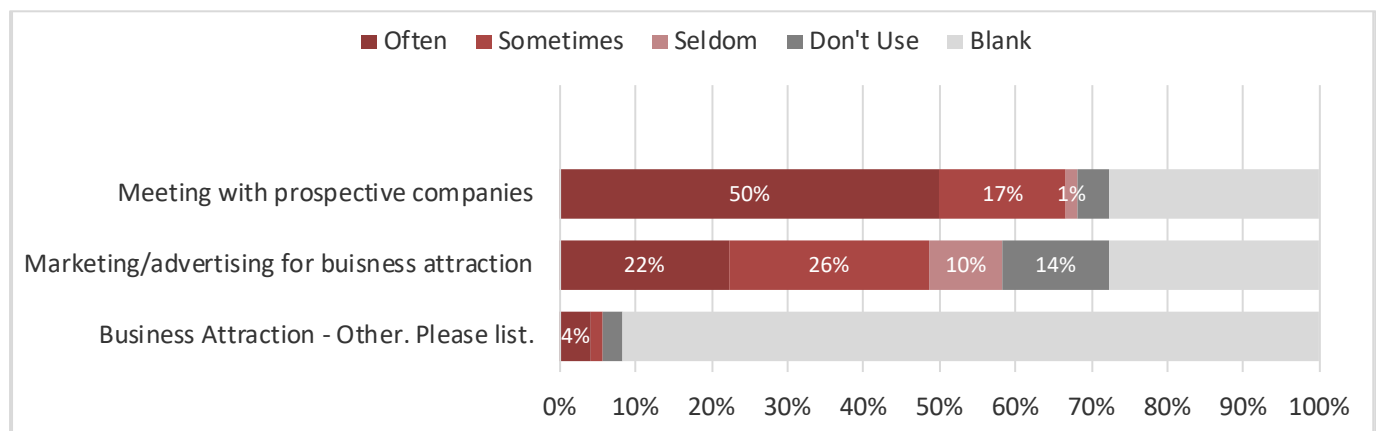


	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Don't Use	Blank	Used at all
Business visitation- as needed	29%	33%	4%	6%	28%	67%
Surveys of local business	10%	33%	22%	11%	24%	65%
Energy efficiency programs	17%	32%	11%	14%	26%	60%
Local business publicity program	19%	19%	18%	19%	24%	57%
Business visitation- planned program	26%	22%	6%	18%	28%	54%
Business clusters/industrial districts	22%	14%	6%	31%	28%	42%
Main street program	21%	14%	6%	36%	24%	40%
Ombudsman program	17%	8%	8%	39%	28%	33%
Business improvement districts	8%	11%	8%	50%	22%	28%
Technology zones	6%	8%	10%	51%	25%	24%
Replacing imports with locally supplied goods	1%	6%	10%	49%	35%	17%
Export development assistance	1%	3%	13%	54%	29%	17%
Other	1%	1%	0%	6%	92%	3%

## Business Attraction Strategies

While a limited number of attraction strategies were included in the survey, **meeting with prospective companies** was used by the majority of respondents (68%). Six respondents specified other strategies including telephone contacts, tax abatement programs, website/media, enterprise zone, trade shows, and multi-town collaborating for marketing.

Chart 11. Business Attraction Strategies - Frequency of Municipal Respondent Use (n=72)



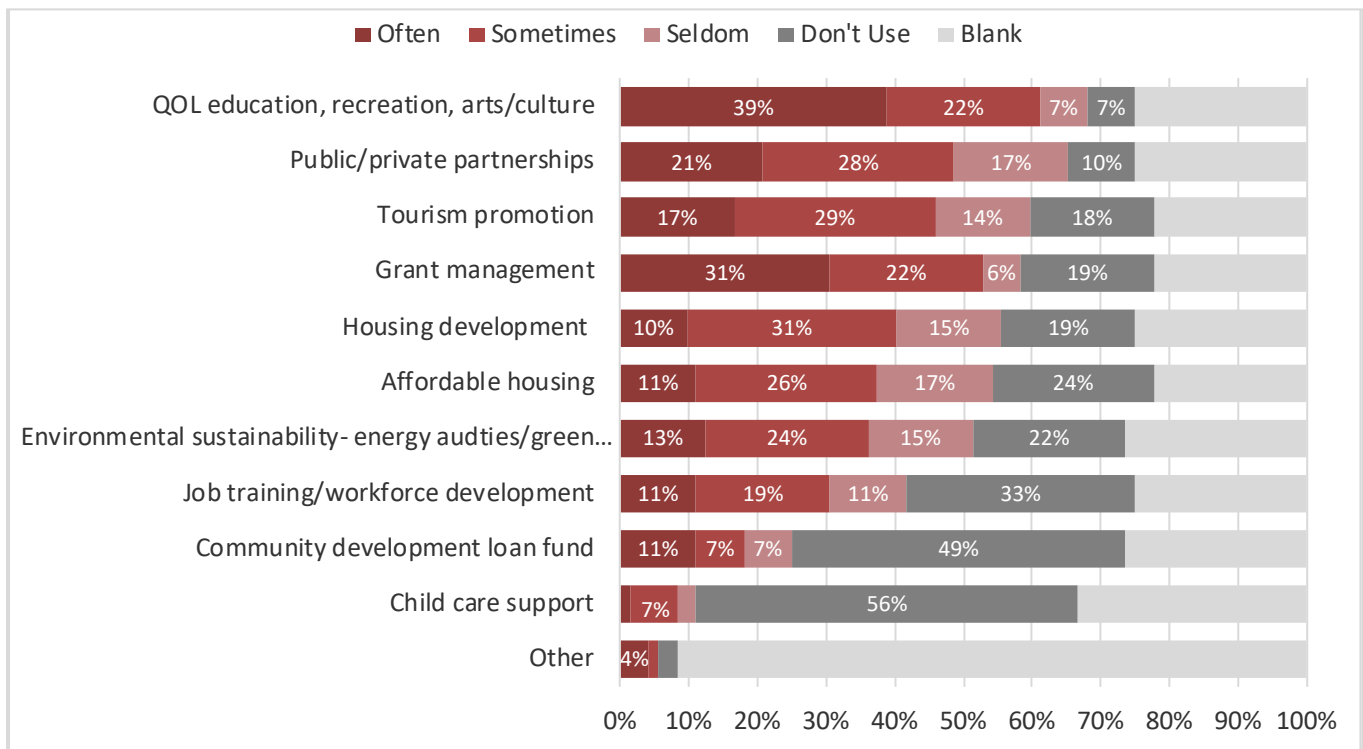
	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Don't Use	Blank	Used at all
Meeting with prospective companies	50%	17%	1%	4%	28%	68%
Marketing/advertising for business attraction	22%	26%	10%	14%	28%	58%
Business Attraction - Other. Please list.	4%	1%	0%	3%	92%	6%

## Community Development & Quality of Life Strategies

The most used community development strategy was *investment in quality of life including education, recreation, arts and culture* with 68% responding that they use this strategy. This is not surprising given the broad scope of quality of life program possibilities. Other widely used strategies were *public/private partnerships* (65%), and *tourism promotion* (60%).

**The two least used strategies were *child care support programs* and *community development loan funds*.** Seven respondents reported using other strategies including chambers of commerce, farmland preservation, and home rehabilitation loan program, infrastructure improvements, and neighborhood stabilization activities.

Chart 12. Community Development and Quality of Life Strategies - Frequency of Municipal Respondent Use (n=72)

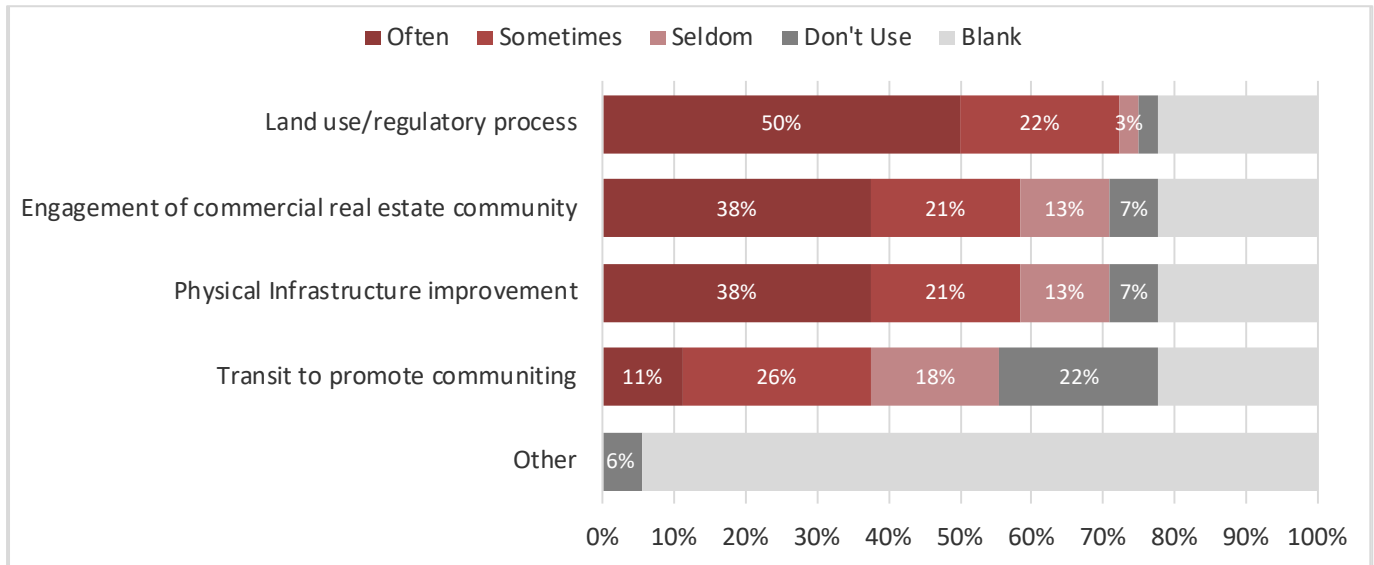


	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Don't Use	Blank	Used at all
Investments in quality of life (education, recreation, arts/culture)	39%	22%	7%	7%	25%	68%
Public/private partnerships	21%	28%	17%	10%	25%	65%
Tourism promotion	17%	29%	14%	18%	22%	60%
Grant management	31%	22%	6%	19%	22%	58%
Housing development	10%	31%	15%	19%	25%	56%
Affordable housing	11%	26%	17%	24%	22%	54%
Environmental sustainability- energy audits/green building incentives	13%	24%	15%	22%	26%	51%
Job training/workforce development	11%	19%	11%	33%	26%	42%
Community development loan fund	11%	7%	7%	49%	26%	25%
Business assistance, loans and grants to support child care	1%	7%	3%	56%	33%	11%
Other	4%	1%	0%	3%	92%	6%

## Land Use & Infrastructure

Land use/regulatory process was a strategy used at all by 75% of all respondents indicating this is a widely used strategy across the state for economic developers. Physical infrastructure improvement and engaging the commercial real estate community were also substantially used with 38 indicating they use these strategies often. Transit to promote commuting was least used with 22% of respondents indicating they don't do this. One other strategy was identified by a respondent: regular revision continuously.

Chart 12. Land Use Strategies - Frequency of Municipal Respondent Use (n=72)



	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Don't Use	Blank	Used at all
Land use/regulatory process	50%	22%	3%	3%	22%	75%
Physical Infrastructure improvement	38%	21%	13%	7%	22%	71%
Engagement of commercial real estate comm	38%	21%	13%	7%	22%	71%
Transit to promote commuting	11%	26%	18%	22%	22%	56%
Other	0%	0%	0%	6%	94%	0%

## Indicators of Success

Respondents were asked to specify what indicators they use to evaluate the success of economic development activities in the communities they serve. Indicator data was analyzed using the complete dataset of 110 responses including respondents at all geographic levels.

**Top indicators for measuring economic development activities were tax base expansion, number of businesses, and capital investment.**

Indicator	%
Tax base expansion	79%
Number of businesses	72%
Capital investment	63%
Number of jobs created	61%
Neighborhood revitalization	49%
Environmental sustainability	20%
Social equity	15%
Increase in wage rates	12%
Other.	8%
Do not evaluate.	7%
Poverty rate reduction	4%
I don't know.	0%



Other responses included *office and industrial vacancy, building permit totals, inquiries, building permits, trade name registrations, Informal evaluations, Project delivery success rate, tourism increase, and miscellaneous.*

## Challenges or Barriers to Economic Development

Respondents were asked to indicate if the communities they serve face a list of barriers or challenges to economic development and indicate the level of importance of each. This analysis was conducted using the full data set of 110 responses across geographic levels.

**Top barriers identified to economic development include *taxes, lack of available land, inadequate infrastructure, lack of public transportation, lack of capital/funding, and cost of land.***

Nearly a third (29.1%) of respondents said *quality of life issues* were not a barrier to economic development and 44.5% said *quality of life* was not important. 21.8% of respondents said traffic congestion was not a barrier and 40% said this was not important. This data was not analyzed by community size or geography and those factors would be likely to affect the extent to which these barriers are more or less relevant in a given community.

	Very Important	Moderately Important	Not Important	Not a Barrier	Blank
Taxes	28.2%	18.2%	19.1%	8.2%	95.5%
Lack of available land	26.4%	23.6%	16.4%	10.0%	32.7%
Inadequate infrastructure	26.4%	21.8%	17.3%	7.3%	36.4%
Lack of public transportation	24.5%	24.5%	17.3%	10.9%	36.4%
Lack of capital/funding	23.6%	25.5%	11.8%	5.5%	33.6%
Cost of land	21.8%	26.4%	17.3%	7.3%	33.6%
Limited number of major employers	20.0%	24.5%	22.7%	12.7%	33.6%
Lengthy permit process	20.0%	19.1%	27.3%	16.4%	34.5%
Lack of buildings (due to space/costs)	19.1%	34.5%	11.8%	3.6%	34.5%
Citizen opposition	17.3%	23.6%	25.5%	10.9%	33.6%
Environmental regulations	15.5%	21.8%	28.2%	9.1%	36.4%
Declining market to to population loss	14.5%	20.0%	29.1%	18.2%	33.6%
Distance from major markets	13.6%	20.9%	29.1%	14.5%	34.5%
Lack of skilled labor	12.7%	18.2%	32.7%	15.5%	32.7%
High cost of housing	12.7%	23.6%	30.0%	12.7%	39.1%
Traffic congestion	11.8%	15.5%	40.0%	21.8%	42.7%
Income inequality	10.0%	18.2%	35.5%	17.3%	40.0%
High cost of labor	9.1%	20.9%	30.0%	10.9%	36.4%
Lack of political support	7.3%	19.1%	39.1%	26.4%	34.5%
Quality of life issues	6.4%	15.5%	44.5%	29.1%	34.5%
Lack of affordable, quality child care	5.5%	23.6%	28.2%	12.7%	34.5%
Other. Please list.	1.8%	0.0%	2.7%	1.8%	33.6%

## Effective Programs & Partnerships

This survey additionally sought to identify factors for success in economic development, including effective partnerships. Respondents were asked “*In your role related to economic development for this municipality or organization, what groups or organizations have you actively partnered with on projects or programs in the past year? (Check all that apply).*” An overwhelming percentage of respondents across all geographic levels (n=110) had partnered with a *Council of Government* (88.0%) and 81.3% had partnered with *private business or industry*. The *Federal Government* and *Regional Chambers of Commerce* represented the least number of respondents indicating a partnership.

Partner	Percent
Council of government	88.0%
Private business/industry	81.3%
Local chamber of commerce	77.3%
State government agency (Please list)	76.0%
Utility	62.7%
Local or regional non profit	62.7%
Public/private partnership	56.0%
Another local government (city/town)	52.0%
Educational institution (Please list)	46.7%
Local main street program	44.0%
Statewide non profit organization (Please list)	37.3%
Federal government agency (Please list)	34.7%
Regional chamber of commerce	13.3%
Other.	2.7%

Respondents were also asked to list the top state agencies, state non-profits, federal agencies, and academic institutions with which they had partnered. Top responses included the state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD, 41) and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP, 14), the top non-profit was the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC, 9), top federal agencies included the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 8) and the Economic Development Administration (EDA, 6), and top academic institutions included University of Connecticut (12), Western Connecticut State University (3) and Southern Connecticut State University (3).

Respondents were also asked to provide specific programs or partnerships that they feel have been particularly effective. The following were listed:

- Facade and Landscaping Matching Grant Program/Tax Abatement Program
- DECD
- Canton Main Street
- Working Cities Challenge
- Ellington's Tax Abatement Program
- As an innovation Place the partnership within region has been crucial
- CRDA (Capital Region Development Authority) (2)
- Middlesex County Chamber -- multiple small business programs
- Regional Government Agencies
- WestCOG, CT DECD
- Brownfields Assessment & Redevelopment Funding
- The public/private partnership to lease the Brownstone Quarry National Historic Site to a local business to create the Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park. In return the town receives a percentage of the annual gate receipt (15%) and benefits from the promotional advertising and attendance of over 100,000 people per year.
- CT Main Street Center for small grant planning/outreach programs
- Main Street
- Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
- CT DECD Backing/Support

- 
- Use the Small Business Development Center on a monthly basis. It has been a very useful resource for our small businesses.
  - Facade Improvement Program
  - Our partnership with MetroHartford Alliance has been very effective in responding to out-of-state prospects
  - Small Business Express Loan Program
  - Commercial realtors and commercial banker along with local economic development professionals are important to our organization for leads and relationships.

## Support for Economic Developers

Economic developers play an important role in supporting local development projects and programs. Respondents were also asked about economic development training or education would help them to be more effective. The following responses were provided.

- Funding
- Training in identifying financial resources available to businesses in our jurisdiction.
- Better understanding of resources available
- CEcD (3) - Certified Economic Developer
- More CEcD courses closer to CT (2)
- Not much offered now for the profession itself other than the CEcD course
- Rest
- New trends, tools (e.g. IT), partnerships, labor force attraction, roundtable discussions
- On-line courses offered by local university
- Local annual training
- Realty education
- EDFP - (2) Economic Development Finance Professional
- EDP (Economic Development Program?)
- Just keep offering the ongoing professional workshops/classes/seminars/etc.
- Workforce development
- Certification

## Recommendations/Conclusions

### Key Findings/Recommendations:

- **As Connecticut's economic development professionals retire, consider tapping into their knowledge base by developing internship or mentorship programs to engage young professionals** . The aging of Connecticut's economic development community means many communities may experience changes as these professionals retire. Their extensive experience may present opportunities for mentorship or internship programs for younger professionals.
- **Engage young people and people of color to consider economic development careers** and more appropriately reflect the diversity of state residents.
- **Further explore needs and address economic development staffing gaps/needs in the state's larger municipalities.**
- Land use and regulatory processes were the most used strategies by economic developers across the state. **Ensure that economic developers have access to adequate training and information regarding land use and regulatory process** and explore opportunities for further professional development,
- **Highlight best practices in land use for economic developers** (as is being supported by the CEDAS Land Use for Economic Development Program) and **increase cooperation between the planning and economic development communities to create a more cohesive development process**
- **Consider ways to share best practices for recording indicators of success across municipalities.** While all communities should have their own indicators based on unique assets, creating some uniform language and process may help to tell a broader story statewide or across regions
- **Focus resources on addressing modifiable barriers to economic development including taxes, infrastructure improvements and public transportation.** The Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth has taken on a number of these issues.
- **Investigate and publicize successful partnerships and support organizations such as Councils of Government, that serve as key partners in economic development**
- **Develop more comprehensive professional training programs for Connecticut's economic development community including CEcD or EDFP style programs.** Economic developers play an important role in supporting local and regional development projects and programs and respondents clearly want more access to certifications and professional development.

- **Consider additional analysis and ongoing research.** This was the pilot year that this survey was assessed. Additional analysis in future surveys could be conducted for more in depth analysis that would apply to communities in various size quartiles. Additional analysis might also consider geographic/regional variation. A robust statistical and correlative analysis was beyond the scope of this report but such analysis could be conducted if a more robust data set can be obtained in the future. The hope would be to increase response rates by municipalities to reduce error. Throughout this report we have noted where small response rates (for Very small communities, for instance) made analysis challenging.

## APPENDIX A: Connecticut Local Economic Development Organization Survey

**Q1 About the 2018 Connecticut Local Economic Development Organization Survey** The purpose of the Connecticut Local Economic Development Organization Survey is to understand who is involved in economic development activities in Connecticut and how economic development strategies are conducted at the local level over time. This information will be used to help municipalities and organizations identify opportunities to coordinate on regional strategies, make comparable investments in economic development, and implement strategies that are most effective. Resource providers can use this information to provide education and tools to support the economic development programs that are most relevant and important to communities across the state. The survey was developed and is being implemented by the University of Connecticut Extension in partnership with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), the Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS) and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM). You have been contacted because you are involved in economic development and we would like to request your participation on behalf of the organization or municipality you represent. The survey includes questions regarding the structure and organization of economic development functions in your organization or municipality, investments being made in economic development, strategies being implemented and how are they evaluated, and demographic information about economic development staff. Demographic information will be used to gain insight into the overall makeup of the economic development community statewide and will be reported only in aggregate to avoid individual identification. The survey questionnaire contains 28 questions and will take about 10 minutes of your time. You do not need to complete all of the questions and you may withdraw at anytime. At the end of the survey you will have the option to provide your email address if you would like to receive a copy of the completed study report of aggregated data. No other compensation will be provided to participants.

This survey may be completed by any individual responsible for or knowledgeable about economic development activities for an organization or municipality in Connecticut. You may complete this survey only once. For the purposes of this survey economic development refers to: a program, group of policies, or set of activities that seeks to improve economic well-being and the quality of human life in a community by creating or retaining jobs, income and wealth that facilitates growth and provides a stable tax base.

For more information about this survey please contact Laura Brown, Community & Economic Development Educator, University of Connecticut Extension, [laura.brown@uconn.edu](mailto:laura.brown@uconn.edu), 203-207-0063. To consent to the above and continue to the survey, click the arrow below.

Q2 Which of the following most closely describes your position?

- Economic development professional
- Planner
- Elected official
- Consultant
- Volunteer
- Other. Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

Q3 Which of the following best describes the primary geography for which you conduct economic development activities?

- Statewide
- Regional
- Local/Municipal
- Other. Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

Q4 Which of the following general planning region or regions best describe the primary geography for which you conduct economic development activities?

- Capitol
- Greater Bridgeport
- Lower CT River Valley
- Naugatuck Valley
- Northeast CT
- Northwest Hills
- South Central
- Southeastern CT
- Other. Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

Q5 Please specify the planning region and town or city for which you conduct economic development activities.

- Planning Region
- Town/City

Q6 Which of the following statements best describes who has responsibility for economic development in your local government? (Check only one.)

- An elected economic development commission
- An appointed economic development commission
- A nonprofit development corporation
- Other. Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_
- I don't know.

Q7 Is your municipality served by an economic development corporation?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

Q8 Including yourself, how many staff (paid) or volunteers (unpaid) are responsible for economic activities in your municipality or organization?

- Full time (40 hours/week) staff. Specify number.
- Part-time (< 40 hours/week) staff. Specify number.
- Volunteers. Specify number.
- I don't know.

Q9 Please indicate your municipality or organization's level of use of the following economic development tools and programs in the past year or current year. If you are not sure or don't know please check "Don't Know."

Q10 Small Business



	Don't Use	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Don't Know
Revolving loan fund	•	•	•	•	•
Small business development center	•	•	•	•	•
Microenterprise program	•	•	•	•	•
Matching improvement grants (physical upgrades to business properties)	•	•	•	•	•
Vendor/supplier matching	•	•	•	•	•
Marketing assistance	•	•	•	•	•
Accelerator/incubator	•	•	•	•	•
Management training	•	•	•	•	•
Executive on loan/mentor	•	•	•	•	•
Other. Please list.	•	•	•	•	•

#### Q11 Business Retention & Expansion

	Don't Use	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Don't Know
Business visitation- planned program	•	•	•	•	•
Business visitation- as needed	•	•	•	•	•
Surveys of local business	•	•	•	•	•
Ombudsman program	•	•	•	•	•
Local business publicity program (community-wide)	•	•	•	•	•
Replacing imports with locally supplied goods	•	•	•	•	•
Export development assistance	•	•	•	•	•
Business clusters/industrial districts	•	•	•	•	•

Technology zones	•	•	•	•	•
Energy efficiency programs	•	•	•	•	•
Business improvement districts	•	•	•	•	•
Main street program	•	•	•	•	•
Other. Please list.	•	•	•	•	•

Q12 Business Attraction

	Don't Use	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Don't Know
Meeting with prospective companies	•	•	•	•	•
Marketing/advertising for business attraction (e.g., media, direct mail, website)	•	•	•	•	•
Other. Please list.	•	•	•	•	•

Q13 Community Development & Quality of Life

	Don't Use	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Don't Know
Community development loan fund	•	•	•	•	•
Environmental sustainability- energy audits/green building incentives	•	•	•	•	•
Job training/workforce development	•	•	•	•	•
Business assistance, loans and grants to support child care	•	•	•	•	•
Grant management	•	•	•	•	•
Housing development	•	•	•	•	•
Affordable housing	•	•	•	•	•

Investments in quality of life (education, recreation, arts/culture)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tourism promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public/private partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please list.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q14 Land Use & Infrastructure

	Don't Use	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Don't Know
Transit to promote commuting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical infrastructure improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engagement of commercial real estate community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land use/regulatory process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please list.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15 In your role related to economic development for this municipality or organization, what groups or organizations have you actively partnered with on projects or programs in the past year? (Check all that apply)

- Local chamber of commerce
- Regional chamber of commerce
- Council of government
- Local main street program
- Utility
- Another local government (city/town)
- Private business/industry
- Public/private partnership

- Local or regional non profit
- State government agency (Please list)
- Statewide non profit organization (Please list)
- Federal government agency (Please list)
- Educational institution (Please list)
- Other. Please list. \_\_\_\_\_

Q16 What are the primary indicators you use to evaluate the success of economic development activities in the communities you serve? Check all that apply.

- Number of jobs created
- Number of businesses
- Tax base expansion
- Increase in wage rates
- Capital investment
- Poverty rate reduction
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Environmental sustainability
- Social equity
- Other. Please list. \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not evaluate.
- I don't know.

Q17 Please indicate if the communities you serve face the following barriers or challenges to economic development and their level of importance.

	Not a Barrier	Not Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Don't Know
Lack of available land	•	•	•	•	•
Cost of land	•	•	•	•	•

Lack of buildings (due to space/costs)	•	•	•	•	•
Inadequate infrastructure	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of skilled labor	•	•	•	•	•
High cost of labor	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of affordable, quality child care	•	•	•	•	•
Limited number of major employers	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of capital/funding	•	•	•	•	•
Taxes	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of public transportation	•	•	•	•	•
Distance from major markets	•	•	•	•	•
Lengthy permit process	•	•	•	•	•
Environmental regulations	•	•	•	•	•
Quality of life issues (inadequate education, recreation, and arts/culture)	•	•	•	•	•
Lack of political support	•	•	•	•	•
Citizen opposition	•	•	•	•	•
High cost of housing	•	•	•	•	•
Declining market to to population loss	•	•	•	•	•
Traffic congestion	•	•	•	•	•
Income inequality	•	•	•	•	•
Other. Please list.	•	•	•	•	•

Q18 Is there a program or partnership that you feel has been particularly effective in your community or region? If so, please describe.

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Q19 What is your municipality or organization's estimated FY 2018 annual budget for economic development and related activities in whole dollars?

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Q20 Approximately what percent of your estimated *revenue* for economic development is each of the following (must sum to 100):

- State grants : \_\_\_\_\_
- Federal grants : \_\_\_\_\_
- Private grants : \_\_\_\_\_
- Local funds : \_\_\_\_\_
- Donations : \_\_\_\_\_
- Sponsorships : \_\_\_\_\_
- Memberships : \_\_\_\_\_
- In-Kind : \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please list) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please list) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Total : \_\_\_\_\_

Q21 Approximately what percent of your estimated total *expenditures* for economic development is each of the following (must sum to 100):

- Salaries : \_\_\_\_\_
- Incentives : \_\_\_\_\_
- Marketing : \_\_\_\_\_
- Events : \_\_\_\_\_
- Revolving loan fund : \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please list) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please list) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Total : \_\_\_\_\_

Q22 What formal economic development training, certifications or professional development have you received? Check all that apply:

- Degree in economic development, planning or related field

- Associates Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctorate or PhD
- Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) courses or certification
- American Planning Association (AICP) certification
- EDFP (Economic Development Finance Professional)
- Other. (Please list) \_\_\_\_\_

Q23 How many years of experience do you have working in economic development?

Q24 What economic development training or education would help you to be more effective?

Q25 What is your age?

- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- Age 65 or older
- Prefer not to answer.

Q26 To which gender identity do you most identify?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender/Variant
- Prefer not to answer.

Q27 What is your race? (Persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin may be of any race.)

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Other race
- Prefer not to answer.

Q28 Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer.

Q29 Please provide any suggestions for ways to improve this survey:

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Q30

Thank you for taking time to participate! If you would like to receive the results of this study please provide your email address below. This will not be associated with any of your previous answers or used to identify you in any way.

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