

Frequently Asked Questions

Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) program



What is the AEDO program?

IEDC's Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) Program is a means of recognizing the professional excellence of economic development entities throughout North America. The AEDO Program provides economic development organizations with independent feedback on their operations, structure, and procedures, and recognizes excellence in local economic development efforts. Applicant organizations must be devoted, as stated in their bylaws or articles of incorporation, to economic development.

What are the benefits of accreditation?

During the accreditation process, organizations receive critical evaluation and peer mentoring from industry experts, including a report containing analysis of the organization and recommendations for improvement.

Accreditation brings national recognition to your accomplishments and tells the community that your group meets the highest standard for organizations in the economic development profession. It adds credibility to your efforts to expand support and funding.

Accredited organizations receive exclusive use of the AEDO logo for their letterhead, promotional materials, and website. Organizations are profiled in *Economic Development Now*, IEDC's e-newsletter, and the IEDC website maintains links to each AEDO's homepage. IEDC helps promote the achievement in local media and accredited organizations receive a plaque to display their achievement.

What is the process?

The accreditation process consists of two phases, designed to elicit specific information about the structure, organization, funding, programs, and staff of the candidate economic development organization.

Phase one is a documentation review. Applicants submit documents demonstrating the organization's development, structure and activity. The document review process also helps determine if organizations are eligible for accreditation and deserving of a site team visit.

Phase two is a site team visit. The site team visit is designed to assess the organization in action. Members of the AEDO committee and/or Certified Economic Developers conduct the visit. The site team meets with key personnel and community leaders over a two-day period.

Following the site visit, the site team makes a recommendation on the application. The AEDO committee then votes on the recommendation.



What is the basis for evaluation?

During the documentation and site team reviews, IEDC focuses on four critical issues:

- Does the organization have professional leadership & staffing adequate to its mission?
- Does the organization have the budget and resources adequate to its job?
- Does the organization have the respect and support of a community base with active commitment and participation appropriate to its mission?
- Does the organization have a strategic plan that it follows, allocating resources based on its mission and the opportunities that it has identified?

What if my organization is not approved?

Candidate organizations do not “pass” or “fail” this process. Every candidate organization that fails to receive accreditation will be advised of the necessary steps to be implemented to attain accreditation. Each organization will receive information and guidance on the areas of the accreditation process that require further development.

How long is the accreditation process?

From the time an organization submits documentation to the time it becomes accredited is approximately 3 to 4 months.

How long is the accreditation valid?

The accreditation is valid for three years. After three years, organizations may apply for reaccreditation. Reaccreditation does not require a site visit unless the organization has undergone a significant change in mission, funding or leadership.

How much does it cost?

Accreditation & reaccreditation fees are based on the budget of the organization. Fees for members range from \$1,100 to \$6,900 for accreditation, and \$700 to \$4,500 for reaccreditation.

For accreditations, all travel and lodging expenses of the site visit team are reimbursed by the candidate organization. There is an application fee of \$250.

Do IEDC member organizations receive a discount?

Yes. IEDC member organizations receive discounts on both accreditation fees and reaccreditation fees. Discounts range between \$300 and \$3,000.

Will the information that I submit for documentation review remain confidential?

Yes. Given the nature of the information disclosed and the sometimes sensitive workings of applicant economic development organizations, all documentation and proceedings relating to the AEDO accreditation process will remain confidential. Information on candidate organizations, regardless of whether they become accredited, will not be disclosed to third parties.

For more information about the AEDO program, please refer to the AEDO Program Outline: http://www.iedconline.org/Downloads/AEDO_Outline.pdf

You may also contact Tye Libby at (202) 942-9450 or tlibby@iedconline.org

