



2021
Economic
Development
Week

May 9-15

2021 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEEK TOOLKIT

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2021 Economic Development Week Toolkit

Your campaign will be among many celebrations, all sharing success stories and information about programs and services offered by local, regional, and state economic development organizations! Economic development is at the core of well-being and quality of life for communities across the United States. It is a group of policies, programs, and activities that seek to create and retain jobs and ultimately facilitate economic growth. This celebration guide will help you create lasting impressions in your community: highlight your EDO's key differentiators, service offerings, and impacts being made to accomplish your job agenda.

Celebrate and share successes your EDO has seen in the prior year! This guide will show you how to:

Articulate: The value your work has contributed to your local economy and explain how this all helps your community.

Organize: Invite local lawmakers, fellow economic developers, and industry supporters, such as your partners and sponsors.

Show and Tell: Heighten awareness and emphasize the importance and impacts of economic development in your community. Be creative. See some ideas your peers included in their activities.

Amplify: Invite local press to attend your gatherings to help increase exposure through stories and interviews of your elected officials and your EDO's CEO.



About Economic Development Week:

Economic Development Week was created by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in 2016. To increase awareness of local programs that create jobs, advance career development opportunities, and improve communities' quality of life everywhere, we have continued the tradition. Over the last five years, 450+ campaigns have been made throughout the United States and Canada. EDOs have created millions of impressions, hundreds of news stories, blog entries, videos, events, and other activities. Campaigns occurred in all 50 American states in 2019, with more than 60 communities officially proclaiming Economic Development Week.



About the International Economic Development Council:

The International Economic Development Council is a non-profit, nonpartisan membership organization serving economic developers for 95 years. In 2001, AEDC and CUED merged to form the world's preeminent organization for economic developers: IEDC. With more than 5,000 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Since 1926, we have set out to diversify, improve, and celebrate economic development efforts around the world. Ninety-five years since the beginnings of AEDC, economic development and equity issues persist. IEDC continues to educate professionals around the world on best practices for addressing these issues through courses and publications and works closely with rural and urban communities through disaster recovery and strategic planning initiatives. IEDC's programs offer world-class professional development, accreditation, research, and advocacy.

Section 1: Build the Hype!

Planning an economic development campaign offers immediate and long-term success. Creating a one-week celebration can include actual community events, the launching of new resources, or even the opening of a new community asset to substantially increase your economic development organization’s visibility. Your campaign can be designed to deliver general or specific details about your organization’s mission, the history of economic development in your community, facts about the profession, your EDO’s service offerings, and any major success stories with businesses in your community. However you choose to celebrate, you’ll need to build hype in your community. Here are a few ways to get you started.

Write a letter to the editor for your community’s newspaper. Here’s how:

Who should write? Your most prominent brand ambassadors and those who are passionate about your vision and mission! It’s important to have your elected and appointed officials or recognized local authorities submit articles. Examples of all titles include governor, mayor, business leader, executive economic developer, board chairman, or another civic leader. You can always write one for them as well, as that can expedite the process and ensure that the message is on-brand!

So, what should you write about? No doubt, you have a story to tell. The key is to think about what would resonate the best with the audience of your letter. Choose a storytelling approach by using data to emphasize what’s most important. Share a public interest story about a thriving business in your community thanks to a collaboration/your EDO’s support. Be sure your messages are concise, making it easier for editors to get to the main points. You may also use this as an opportunity to formally educate your community on the significant activities of economic development and which ones your organization specializes in. Include imagery, testimonials, and graphics to help guide the reader’s eye.

Download a press release template:

Customize this document with your celebration campaign. The release applies to communities, organizations, and businesses. Pull all your press contacts into one list, and start by distributing your release to local news outlets. For broad campaigns, consider adding state, regional and national publications to your distribution. You’ll most likely have to follow up with reporters to ensure they received it and offer additional campaign information to further your chances of gaining some press exposure. Access the press release template at iedconline.org/edw.

Section 2: #EconDevWeek Social Media Strategy

Chances are most people in your community are avid social media users. They have mastered many of the most popular platforms. You don’t have to worry about training people to share your great news! They’ll do it for you and may have tricks to increase the reach that exceed your capabilities and budget. Engage them as much as you can. If you have not already done so, give them guidelines to interact positively across your channels. Encourage the sharing of photos and videos on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Make sure to use the official hashtags (#EconDevWeek and #EDW2021) so that your peers across the country see your postings. Using the official hashtag also allows us to share, repost and retweet your messages here at IEDC and broadcast your message to our audience.

IEDC’s official social media accounts include:



Like our Economic Development Week Page on Facebook:

Go to Facebook.com and search for “Economic Development Week,” or visit www.facebook.com/EconomicDevelopmentWeek. Post your celebration photos, articles, and other news items to this page, tag them in photos and videos you share on your pages, and share content about Economic Development Week directly from this page as well.

2021 Sample Artwork

Download the 2021 EDW sample artwork [here](#) for your promotion needs. Art is available in several dimensions and file types.



Need the source files or a different file type? Send an email to Hannah Chertock at hchertock@iedconline.org

Sample Social Media Posts

For LinkedIn & Facebook:

Post 1: Communities worldwide are preparing to participate in the 2021 Economic Development Week celebration, and so are we. We'd like to hear from you: what economic development topics would you like to learn about? #EconDevWeek #EDW2021 – **ADD URL**

Post 2: Save the dates! 2021 #EconDev Week runs from May 9 – 15. Keep an eye out as we prepare to showcase the programs – and the people – who make our communities stronger! **ADD URL**

Post 3: 2021 #EconDevWeek kicks off today! Watch for [tag your organization] events and activities all week. #EDW2021 – **ADD URL**

For Twitter and Instagram:

Post 1: We worked with # businesses in 2020. We're aiming to help # in 2021. Let's make your organization one of them. Learn more about what we're doing to strengthen local business and create jobs in [your community] by participating in #EconDevWeek! Check out our event calendar – **ADD URL**

Post 2: It's official! We've declared #EDW2021 in city/county. Thanks to our elected officials for recognizing the value of the profession. #EconDevWeek @iedctweets – **ADD URL**

Post 3: In 2020, # new businesses launched in [your city, county]. Find out what it takes to successfully launch yours this year. EDW2021 – **ADD URL**

Section 3: Celebration Ideas for #EconDevWeek

Gain the Support of Elected Officials by Drafting a Proclamation:

Dozens of communities officially proclaimed Economic Development Week in 2020. Not only were proclamations and resolutions signed in person, but many were posted online and shared within communities. Sample resolutions are available at [iedconline.org /edw](https://iedconline.org/edw).

Reach Out to Local Bloggers and Creators:

Identify local artists, bloggers, and creatives covering economic development and reach out to them. Local Bloggers, creatives, and online influencers are incredibly important potential allies, as they represent trusted third-party perspectives on social issues and commercial brands. You'll need to give them credit for their hard work. Logo and link exchanges, special social media badges, and even an online forum that allows them to share the stories are all ideas to consider. These professionals can remain long-term partners even after the celebration ends.

Give a Virtual Tour of Your Offices:

Prepare to bring in specific crowds while taking your messages directly to general audiences. Show off your staff, office, and service offerings by holding a virtual office tour! It doesn't have to be fancy, but it should be sketched out. Create a storyboard before doing so to ensure you get your points across, and add an element of surprise by having your executive leadership teams and elected officials participate.

Host a Photo Competition:

Photo competitions are one of the most accessible, easy ways to encourage community-wide participation in Economic Development Week festivities. Additionally, these competitions produce content that can last well beyond the week itself. While your criteria will vary depending on the needs of your community, be sure to set parameters that encourages creativity among participants, and allows local businesses to express what the profession means to them.

Align with Sponsors:

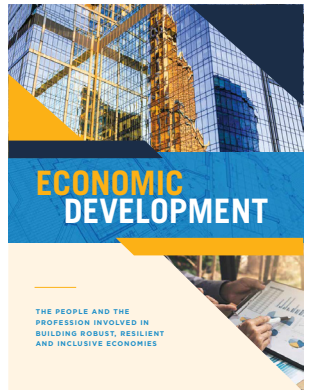
Want to really go all out this year? Consider pursuing a campaign sponsor(s) to help offset the costs. This is an opportunity to partner with companies and community advocates who have similar goals and objectives. Begin thinking of which brands would benefit from the exposure while helping to increase the reach, not only with funding, but also with access to their unique audiences.

Section 4: Distribute Key Tools and Resources

Economic Development Week is an ideal time to bring supporters in your community together in order to educate them on the ways that you can help them accomplish their business, workforce and community objectives. The following resources and tools are designed to help you engage and educate stakeholders in your community about the work you do, why you do it, how you do it and its impacts.

What is Economic Development Brochure:

Economic development is the intentional practice of improving a community's economic well-being and quality of life. It includes a broad-range of activities to attract, create, and retain jobs, and to foster a resilient, pro-growth tax base and an inclusive economy. The practice of economic development comprises of a collaborative effort involving industry, government and myriad community stakeholders. **Download the What is Economic Development Brochure** to provide a basic overview on economic development, EDOs, and what economic developers do for your community as part of your campaign materials.



Who Economic Development Programs Help and How Brochure:

This brochure gives a higher level overview of who and how economic development programs help, including examples of some of the services that EDOs typically provide. Whether your organization provides all of these services or just a few, economic development programs around the country impact myriad people's lives in very different and consequential ways. **Download the brochure** to further your campaign efforts.

Why Invest in Economic Development Brochure:

The *Why Invest in Economic Development* brochure includes information about federal economic development investments that have been implemented in communities across America. **Download the brochure** and pull facts directly from it.



Championing Economic Development Videos:

Check out **IEDC's YouTube page** for a series of videos about the profession and its accomplishments. See interviews with key economic development professionals on topics such as the roles of key partners, engaging elected officials, successful projects and more.

Section 5: Watch a Free Webinar to Finalize Your Communications Strategy

Inside Championing Economic Development & #EconDevWeek Primer

In January 2019, the Economic Development Research Partners (EDRP), the research think-tank of the IEDC, partnered with over 12 economic development organizations (EDOs) to produce a report examining public skepticism of the profession. The report, entitled “Championing Economic Development” addresses common misconceptions the profession faces, and provides guidance to economic developers on how to address challenges facing the industry, including:

- Lack of understanding of the role of economic development as a professional practice
- Lack of understanding of the role of EDOs
- Transparency concerns
- Ideological opposition

An informational webinar reviewing the report, and discussing its key takeaways – **is available on YouTube**. The webinar – featuring IEDC communications staff and former Board Chairs – also reviews best practices for devising a winning #EconDev Week campaign.

Speakers on the webinar include:

- Tracye McDaniel, 2020 IEDC Board Chair
- Craig J. Richard, CEcD, FM, 2020 IEDC Immediate Past Chair
- Jeffrey A. Finkle, CEcD, President & CEO of IEDC
- Matthew Mullin, Vice President of Policy & Communications for IEDC
- Swati Ghosh, Senior Director of Research for IEDC





Watch the webinar recording, *Inside Championing Economic Development*. Visit IEDC's [Youtube Channel for the video](#).

Section 6: Add Your Campaign to the List of Award Winners

Keep the fun going after #EconDevWeek by entering your campaign into the Innovation in Economic Development Week category for the 2021 IEDC Excellence in Economic Development Awards.

Created in 2016 to highlight outstanding EDW celebrations, this category of the IEDC Excellence in Economic Development Awards program offers an opportunity to gain national recognition for your promotional campaign. This award is open to communities, regions, states and provinces who participate in the 2021 Economic Development Week. Types of promotion include, but are not limited to, an event, seminar, marketing tour, web or print projects, video, and digital media campaigns.



Judging criteria for the Innovation in an EDW category includes:

- Goal/mission
- Innovation/creativity
- Effectiveness of EDW promotion
- Community or other EDO involvement (local, regional or state level)
- Use and quality of promotion utilizing social media

Please note that criteria are meant for completion during EDW (May 9-15, 2021)

Innovation in Economic Development Week Award Timeline



Questions? Contact Allison Mahnke at awards@iedconline.org.

Download the application at iedconline.org/2021Awards



Interested in learning more about the Innovation in an EDW category? Register for a webinar on the IEDC Excellence in Economic Development Awards. Visit iedconline.org/awardswebinar.

2021 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEEK IS PRESENTED BY:



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Working for a Better Future for All,
Since 1926

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