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81 Percent of Economic Developers Say Economic Inclusion of High Importance, Survey Says
State of the Economic Development Industry Address Delivered during Leadership Summit

JACKSONVILLE, FL (January 30, 2017) -- According to the 2017 Annual State of the Economic Development Industry survey results, 81 percent of respondents felt that equity and economic inclusion were moderately to very important in their initiatives. This is according to Jeffrey Finkle, CEcD, CEO of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), who shared the results at the organization's Leadership Summit, an annual conference exclusively for Certified Economic Developers and senior managers in the profession.

"We've [IEDC] been talking about it from the podium the last two or three years, and you are starting to spend more efforts around equity," Finkle said.

Compared with survey results in past years, Finkle said that the statistic has been "rising dramatically" as the profession as a whole increases focus on equity and economic inclusion.

Survey respondents also shared their top challenges in 2016, including a lack of skilled labor, inadequate infrastructure and city or county budget cuts.

Finkle also shared survey results showing an increase in partnerships between economic development organizations and educational institutions, especially community colleges. These partnerships can provide more opportunities for specialized training and education to meet community workforce needs. The industries of top interest this year are advanced manufacturing and healthcare, according to the survey.

IEDC Leadership Summit dates are January 29-31, more information and the full schedule of events can be found at www.iedcevents.org/LeadershipSummit.

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About the International Economic Development Council

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 5,000 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities, by creating, retaining and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, IEDC's members are engaged in the full range of economic development experience. Given the breadth of economic development work, our members are employed in a wide variety of settings including local, state, provincial and federal governments, public-private partnerships, chambers of commerce, universities and a variety of other institutions. IEDC's members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities and improve the quality of life in their regions. www.iedcONLINE.org.