



BUSINESS  
FRIENDLY  
BEST  
PRACTICES

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**ESTABLISH SAN BERNARDINO  
COUNTY AS A MODEL IN THE  
STATE WHERE LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT, REGULATORY  
AGENCIES AND COMMUNITIES  
ARE TRULY BUSINESS FRIENDLY.**

- Countywide Vision Implementation Goal adopted by the  
SANBAG Board of Directors and the San Bernardino  
County Board of Supervisors, May 2012

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This inventory of best practices has been compiled as one way to help achieve the goal of being business friendly. While “business friendly” may mean slightly different things to different people, one common understanding is that of fostering a welcome environment for businesses to be created, grow and thrive. This report is a list of programs and practices that were submitted by cities and the County in response to a Best Practices Survey sent to each of SANBAG’s 25 member agencies in April 2013. Also included are some best practices identified by other governmental organizations in reports from the US Conference of Mayors, the Washington State Governor’s Office of Regulatory Assistance, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, the University of North Carolina School of Government, and the Southern California Association of Governments. Feedback received during a Countywide Vision workshop on best practices in development processing between cities and developers and hosted by SANBAG, the County and the Building Industry Association (BIA) is also incorporated into this inventory.

These best practices can be sorted into three specific categories:

- » development processing;
- » business attraction/retention; and
- » direct business assistance (economic incentives).

Before going into the three categories, it is worth taking time to discuss a concept that is the foundation for every program, procedure, or effort. That concept is **customer service**.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

Though not explicitly mentioned in the programs listed in this report, it is good customer service that lies at the heart of a successful program. Sometimes excellent customer service can be traced back to the core attitude of an organization. Every agency has rules and laws that it has an obligation to uphold or enforce. The approach an agency uses to apply regulations makes a big difference. Does your agency try to “make” a business comply or to “help” a business comply? That subtle difference in approach can make all the difference in the world.

The first step to any business friendly effort is to commit your agency to providing excellent customer service. Start with the little things like answering the telephone and responding to e-mails. Find ways to make your processes transparent and accessible. While great customer service does not mean always saying “yes,” it does mean that when saying “no,” explain the reasons why, answer quickly and clearly, and explain how you can help get the answer to “yes.”



The message for excellent customer service must come from the top, be communicated to every layer of an organization, and be reinforced continuously.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE BEST PRACTICES

**Formal Customer Service Procedure** – Make customer service part of staff training and include in employee evaluations. The City of Adelanto has adopted a Customer Service Procedure that is formulated to help generate direction to the city's Utility Billing Staff to best serve customers. The procedure is a set of routine practices and expectations in customer service and is built on finding a better, faster, and more efficient way of doing things. Staff receives training in the customer service procedure and managers are given the responsibility of completing job performance evaluations to see where weaknesses can be rectified. This leads to increased efficiency and better customer service.

**Create a Culture of Customer Service** – The City Manager of Hesperia has made customer service a priority and makes sure the message is communicated clearly from the top of the organization. His comments at a workshop on development processing best practices stressed that from a staff level it is important to create a culture where customer service is a vital element and starts with returning phone calls and messages. He felt that by doing so, Hesperia has received overwhelming positive response on how timely calls are returned. Another principle that he stressed was that it was essential to be straight forward and honest with customers in hopes of creating non-adversarial relationships.

## BUSINESS FRIENDLY BEST PRACTICES CATEGORIES

What follows are three categories of best practices:

- » Development Processing;
- » Business Attraction/Retention; and
- » Direct Business Assistance.

Programs are briefly described so readers can quickly determine if the practice could be applied in their own agency. At the end of the report is an appendix that lists every best practice identified by SANBAG's member agencies along with contact information. If a practice seems like a good fit for an agency, then the next step is to reach out to the contacts listed in this appendix to learn from their experiences and better evaluate appropriateness for the agency.

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IF A PRACTICE SEEMS LIKE A GOOD FIT FOR AN AGENCY, THEN THE NEXT STEP IS TO REACH OUT TO THE CONTACTS LISTED IN THIS APPENDIX TO LEARN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES AND BETTER EVALUATE APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE AGENCY.

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# DEVELOPMENT PROCESSING ●●●●●●●●●●

A major responsibility of every local government is land use and development processing. This is often the very first point of contact a new or expanding business will have with a local agency. The experience in the development process will largely define how “business friendly” a community appears to an outsider. While development processing can be a complex process involving multiple disciplines, departments and agencies, it is largely under the control of local government. When state, regional and federal regulatory agencies are involved in the process, local government loses some control over key parts of the process. While not in control of these outside agencies, how local governments interface with outside agencies and staff’s knowledge about those agencies and their processes can influence the ease of project approval.

Development processing best practices address six major themes:

- 1 Analyze Process, Performance and Cost
- 2 Communicate Intra and Interdepartmentally
- 3 Use Technology
- 4 Encourage Personal Responsibility and Ownership of the Process
- 5 Engage Reviewers and Stakeholders Early
- 6 Make Access Easier

# DEVELOPMENT PROCESSING BEST PRACTICES



## ANALYZE PROCESS, PERFORMANCE AND COSTS [THEMES 1, 2, 3, 6]

The development community desires a process that is consistent and quick. A representative from the home building industry stated at a recent development processing workshop that, "...many development projects struggle to reach the return on investment threshold outlined by the financial pro forma. The quicker a project can be entitled and permitted, the more profitable a project will be. For the housing industry to recover, the approval process must be significantly faster."

Yucaipa's City Manager has challenged his staff to have processing turnaround times that are as good as or better than other cities. Analysis of the process and performance trends reveals and allows prioritization of opportunities for improved predictability, efficiency, speed, and collaboration. When the whole process is visible, inefficiencies stand out.

The City of Hesperia embraced this practice and in 2011 Hesperia's City Manager created a cross departmental team made up of line staff from Engineering, Planning, Building and Safety, Building Inspections, and Information Technology (IT) to examine the entire Development Review process. The goal is to identify inefficiencies, streamline processes, improve customer service, evaluate existing technology, and provide recommendations for changes in staffing, processes and/or technology.

Over the course of a year, staff interviewed a variety of large and small residential and commercial builders to discuss the City's existing processes, visited other municipalities to examine physical layout

of the development related departments and technology used, met with vendors to explore new uses of technology to improve customer service, and met with existing staff to identify bottle-necks.

The resulting report included a number of discoveries that are being addressed, such as: delays between development steps that extended approval times; disparate filing systems between divisions which made information difficult to retrieve across divisions; development software that was too difficult for existing staff to modify and deploy and therefore was largely unused; and builders' desire to have increased access to technology such as online plan submittal, electronic plan checking, and webcast meetings with staff.

To address these issues, the team examined a variety of land use software systems and selected a change from Acela to CRW Trakit. The change required each division to: examine and streamline processes; create a universal filing system making project information available to any user deconstructing silos; improve access to GIS during pre-Development Review Committee (DRC) and DRC meetings; improve communication between divisions and IT; and improve customer service to customers via electronic submittals and plan checking.

Although residential and commercial building has been sparse over the past two years, the City stands poised to respond to increased activity in the future with a new process, new integrated software, and a new attitude.

## REGULARLY SCHEDULED INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS [THEME 2]

Inter-departmental meetings provide the opportunity for departments responsible for development processing to coordinate on matters affecting each of them beyond specific projects. The meetings are not designed for review of specific development projects. These meetings help expedite development processing because they provide a forum to develop efficiencies and coordinate processes and decrease “turf” issues.

## PHYSICAL PROXIMITY OF DEVELOPMENT STAFF [THEME 2]

The simple fact of physical proximity to one another leads to increased communication and efficiency in development processing. This increases opportunities for interdepartmental staff communication and makes it easier for applicants to communicate with staff. The Town of Apple Valley put this practice into action when they opened their development services building adjacent to Town Hall. In this one place are the planning, engineering, building, economic development, housing and sewer divisions of the town with a single counter for the public. Additionally, the finance department has a person at the counter to accept payments for development related services and permits. This arrangement is convenient for the public and makes communication between staff more frequent and convenient.

## USE TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE PROCESS [THEMES 3, 6]

A number of agencies have adopted technology to improve their process. Technology can be used in many ways to help improve efficiency and customer access. The use of technology ranges from in-house electronic permit tracking systems to online access to records, forms, codes and reports. Hesperia (as mentioned earlier) has adopted new software to allow for unified file and project tracking throughout the organization. San Bernardino County has introduced a new web-based platform for the submission of building plans. The program, known as “e-Plan,” allows for the online submission, review and approval of building plans and supporting studies. Rancho Cucamonga has a similar system for simple projects, plus it has a Telephone Interactive Voice Response System that allows customers to schedule inspections, review plan check status, and other case status information 24/7 over the phone.



## PUSH DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY CLOSER TO THE FRONT COUNTER [THEME 4]

Development processing can be a lengthy process. This is sometimes by design and incorporated into state law. But not every development or decision point is the same. Where it makes sense, eliminate lengthy and multiple reviews and push decision making authority closer to the front counter. Some basic decisions should be able to be made at the counter. Examine your permits and approval process and look for ways to eliminate multiple reviews. Establish clear guidelines for what requires a full review and what can be handled by staff and by which staff. Work with the planning commission and city council to develop the necessary policies to identify what and when decisions can be made by staff and when they need to come before commission or council. As part of its efforts to expedite the development review and permitting process, the City of Adelanto has clarified the delegating of permitting authority to the lowest staff level possible. This provides certainty to businesses and avoids the additional months added by taking permit approval to a City Council meeting.



## PRE-DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS [THEME 5]

Many agencies have found that meeting early with those interested in developing can have positive impacts to the process. Generally these meetings allow project applicants to meet with key staff from all of the reviewing departments (typically Planning, Building, and Fire) before they actually submit an application. These meetings help uncover any potential issues with a project before a lot of time and money are spent by the applicant and so there are no surprises that require a plan to be reworked later. Pre-development meetings help applicants submit complete applications. Another way to get complete applications is to make sure the submittal requirements are clear, well documented, and well communicated.



At a recent workshop on development processing held between cities and developers, both groups praised the benefit of early communication. A representative of the Building Industry Association stated, "It is important to seek feedback from the business community to identify public policy benefits and any unintentional consequences. A crucial step in policy decision making is engaging builder, developers, and other stakeholders such as the Building Industry Association before a formal policy is crafted – ideally over a 90-day period. Issues of significance include proposed increases to development

impact fees, processing fees, climate action plans, updates to development code, design standards & zoning.” Staff from the City of Fontana indicated that as much as 30 days can be saved during the plan check process if applicants submit full and complete submittals. Developers can be aided in submitting full and complete submittals by looking at other recent successful projects in a city to give them a guide for what the community is looking for. Developers are looking for clearer direction. A developer at the workshop suggested that cities should consider providing details and examples on what ideal projects should include (beyond what is already spelled out in the general plan or code language). In addition, early and open communication can be beneficial for city staff. Developers can educate city staff on new trends and market demands. It is the city staff that must communicate and educate planning commissioners and city council members on these new trends and how they might be applied to a city’s vision. Market demands are not always in line with what a city feels is ideal. It is important for cities to be open to changes in market trends. This two way flow of information can’t happen unless a city creates opportunities for communication.

There are a number of ways to organize pre-development meetings. A notable example of this best practice is the city of Chino’s “Jump Start” program where applicants learn about important issues and concerns, possible permit requirements and available incentives and services. At the “Jump Start” meeting, applicants receive preliminary information and advice regarding regulations, permits and fees that will be required for the new relocation or expansion. Applicants will also meet the City staff assigned to their project. Where applicable, Chino will also bring in outside agencies like the Air Quality Management District to discuss their processes and expectations as well.

The County of San Bernardino has a similar program with pre-development review meetings with a multi-departmental strike team to discuss project concept, plans and issues prior to the formal submittal of an application to Land Use Services. This pre-development review helps the applicant understand the process and identify any potential issues or regulatory requirements early on. This approach adds clarity and certainty to the development process. Additionally, this meeting is now free for the applicant.

Highland has a standing meeting every Thursday morning for scheduling appointments with potential development applicants to review their projects and give them preliminary feedback and recommendations. This is a no-cost meeting and includes representatives from Planning, Public Works/Engineering, Building & Safety, Public Services, and the Fire Department.

The City of Rancho Cucamonga has a program known as Fast Track. This program starts with a pre-development meeting but goes beyond just that. Developers and builders are encouraged to have pre-submittal meetings with economic and community development staff to discuss the overall project, discuss project challenges, and create a feasible timeline for submittal and approval. Developers and builders are also encouraged to share their development drawings with staff at 60% completion to ensure that the plans

“ THESE MEETINGS HELP UNCOVER ANY POTENTIAL ISSUES WITH A PROJECT BEFORE A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY ARE SPENT BY THE APPLICANT... ”

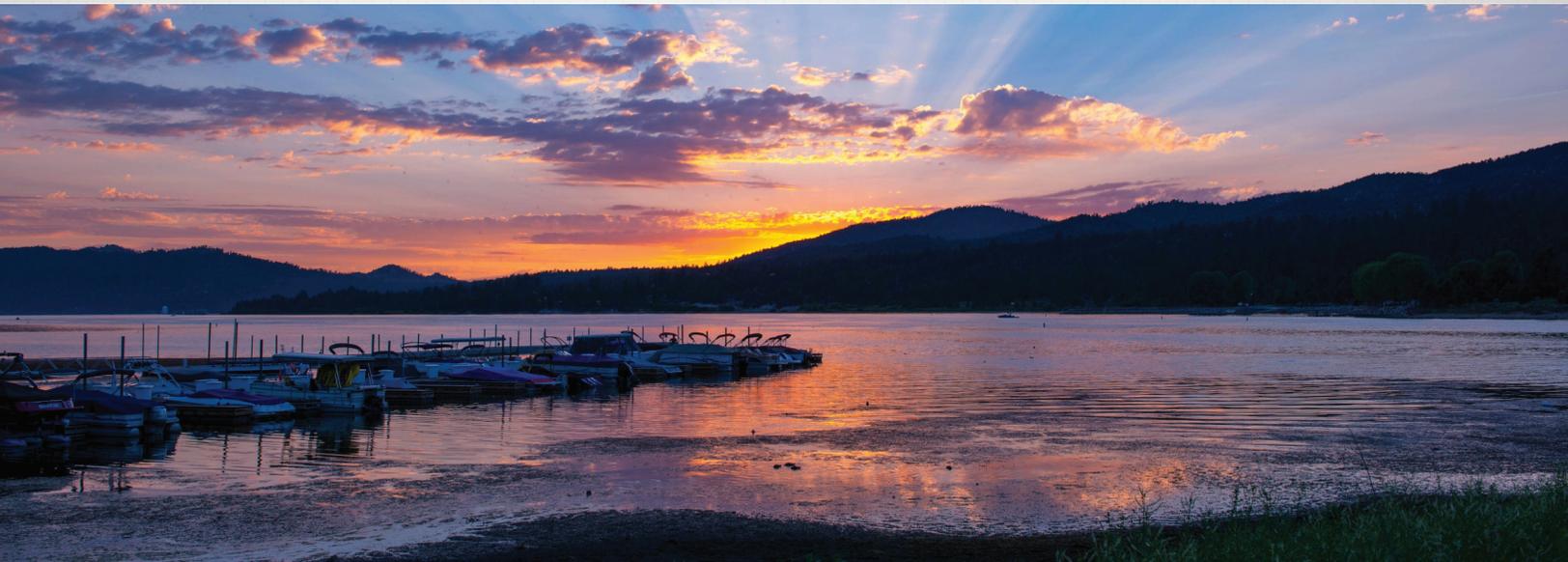
illustrate all the necessary requirements and eliminate re-submittals that add time delays. Once the project has been submitted a Planner is assigned to the project and an economic development staff member tracks the process. Staff also holds meetings during the application process to work out challenges that might arise.

The City of Yucaipa has formed an Economic Development Committee that includes not only the city but also the water district, the school district, the community college and local business leaders. The Committee will help identify all areas where issues might arise during development or areas where the applicant can be assisted. The city assigns a single staff member to be the point of contact for the project and to help shepherd the project through the development process.

## ONE STOP PERMIT CENTER [THEMES 3, 4, 6]

Part of the frustration a business owner faces during the development process is the number of approvals needed before a permit can be granted. In some cases the applicant must make multiple stops with different departments to get all of the necessary approvals with one department, not necessarily being aware of the requirements for information from other departments. Some agencies have sought to address this frustration by creating “One Stop Permit Centers” where the applicant only needs to visit one counter at the agency to get all of the permits and approvals required. After all, from the business community’s perspective, they are doing business with a single city and therefore it only makes sense that there should be a single point of contact to coordinate their permits.

The City of Redlands and the City of Big Bear Lake are organized so that all matters of land use consideration/approval or entitlements are handled at a single, central source in City Hall. Redlands’ One-Stop Permit Center offers a single place for applicants to submit and coordinate projects and plan checks with the building, planning and engineering departments. In Big Bear Lake, planning, building, business license, engineering, utility service and fire inspection are initially reviewed, inserted into their GIS system and



processed by a case manager. The case manager does the virtual “walking around” electronically with all affected agencies, divisions, and departments. The applicant can rely on electronic communications for plan review and permit issuance.

Big Bear Lake takes this concept a step further by offering a Building Concierge Service. More complex building permits and development projects are given a special pathway for consideration. A specific lead official is assigned to marshal the project through the entitlements/permits/notice of completion. Ordinarily the project is taken through a Development Review Committee which is comprised of all officials that ultimately sign off on a project, or are needed to facilitate requisite outside agency approvals. Once the project is issued permits, routine inspection visits are posted on the City’s website each morning. And the City’s Chief Building Official will ordinarily visit the site, project owner and others on a weekly basis to ensure all matters of inspections are being done thoroughly to ensure rapid completion.

## **STAFF TRAINING [THEMES 2, 4]**

It is no surprise that a best practice is to have staff that is knowledgeable and trained. Create a culture of training because a well-trained staff pays immediate benefits in clarity, timeliness, competence and defensible decisions. Consistent training of staff also leads to an increase in consistency and objectivity in the applications of standards and regulations. But it goes beyond knowing the specifics of their individual job. Individual planners, building plan checkers, counter technicians and permit specialists are all part of a bigger process. It is important that individuals know their job and how that job fits into the process. The City of Highland recognizes the importance of the front line staff on the counter to have the training and knowledge necessary to assist businesses with their questions on the process. The City has made staff training a regular part of their operation.

## **STAFFING FLEXIBILITY [THEME 6]**

The boom and bust cycles of the business and development cycle often mean layoffs when permit application numbers fall and backlogs when the economy recovers. To provide the best service, agencies need to be able to quickly bring on extra staff or arrange for outside third party review by consultants when application volumes grow. In addition, agencies may require specialty reviews that require specific professional certifications or expertise. Strategies used to provide this flexibility are to have a bench of pre-qualified individuals, consultants or firms that can be called upon. The key is to pre-qualify these outside staffing resources to insure they are familiar with your agency’s requirements and to insure that your agency’s procurement guidelines have been met so that they can be brought on board quickly. Conversely, when volumes fall agencies need to maintain core staffing levels that cover the basic minimum services. A strategy to help minimal staff provide service during down times is to cross train the staff to provide a wide range of services than time would normally allow for during busy periods.

# BUSINESS ATTRACTION/RETENTION ●●●●●

Another aspect of being business friendly is fostering an environment that helps business growth and success. In San Bernardino County, there are many practices employed by agencies to attract new business growth and expansion or to help existing businesses stay and thrive. While it is important to let businesses know that our community is a good place to start or grow their business, it is just as important to let the businesses that are already here know they are a valued part of the community and that we are all committed to their continued success.

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION/RETENTION BEST PRACTICES ●●●●●●●●●●

### DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS

There are players in every community outside of local government that are vested in business retention and attraction efforts. Where those interests align, it makes sense to develop relationships to help achieve common goals. Examples of these types of mutually beneficial arrangements are cooperative efforts with the local chamber of commerce and increased information sharing and communication with the commercial brokers working in your community.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FUNCTIONS AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDE A FORUM FOR A CITY TO COMMUNICATE TO THE BROADER COMMUNITY ABOUT ISSUES AND INITIATIVES OF IMPORTANCE.





Many cities attend chamber of commerce functions and networking opportunities. This provides a forum for two way communication. It is a way of hearing what is going on in the local business community and identifying any issues that may need to be addressed before they become problems. It is a way for a city to reach out to local businesses and show interest in their success. It also provides a forum for a city to communicate to the broader community about issues and initiatives of importance. Local chambers of commerce are usually looking for ways to provide value for their members and are natural partners to host and promote workshops and meetings. Yucaipa has partnered with their chamber of commerce to provide business practices workshops, shop local programs, and a variety of tools to be used by new or expanding businesses. One such program is aimed at small and home based businesses. The chamber has monthly meetings focused on these businesses and workshops on issues specific to the small and home based businessperson.

Another group with a vested interest in business attraction is the commercial brokers working in your community. They have a financial incentive to see businesses buy or lease space in your community. They are usually very knowledgeable about available commercial inventory and are actively marketing your community to retail, industrial and office users. Develop relationships with these brokers and make the job of selling your community easier by providing them with information that they can use - such as traffic counts and demographic information. Also, make sure they know that they have a specific individual at city hall to call to discuss potential uses and clients.



## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

In a post redevelopment world with fewer resources available for business attraction efforts, working collaboratively makes sense. Where one agency alone might not have the resources, multiple agencies working together can muster the necessary resources. A perfect example of this is Opportunity High Desert.

Opportunity High Desert is a collaborative effort of the cities of Adelanto, Barstow, Hesperia, Victorville and the Town of Apple Valley. These cities are working together in a “non-competitive” atmosphere to help market the region to businesses and make the region more attractive for business development. After the demise of redevelopment, the city managers from these cities got together to discuss how they could become partners for economic development. They realized that any major development in the region benefits the region because of the increased employment and ripple effects throughout the regional economy

and not just in any single city. These cities realized that there would be value to working together and speaking as a single voice for the betterment of the region as a whole. The first idea that sprang from this collaboration was to market the region at the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) Conference. The staff from these cities got together and developed a new booth and marketing materials. This first collaboration has laid the foundation for other areas to work together.

Another example of collaboration in a post redevelopment era is the Tourism Marketing District created by the Cities of Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga. The reduction in flights at Ontario International Airport has hurt the hospitality industry in these cities. The loss of redevelopment funds took away the resources for the branding and marketing efforts of these cities. Working in cooperation with each other and the Ontario Convention Center and Visitor's Bureau, the two cities have formed the Greater Ontario Tourism Marketing District. These agencies came together with the hospitality industry and formed this District which will generate revenue from a 2% self-assessment on hotel stays. This revenue, estimated at \$2.2 million annually, will be used to market the region, attract visitors and increase overnight stays.

Not only is the Tourism Marketing District a great example of collaboration, it is also a demonstration of cities being responsive to the needs of the business community. In this case the specific business community was the hospitality industry and this program could not be accomplished without the collaboration of that industry along with the cities.

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## BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTERS AND BUSINESS CONSULTING

While every city would love to attract a Fortune 500 company to their community, the fact of the matter is that small businesses are the backbone of most local economies and that is especially true in San Bernardino County. Many agencies have developed programs independently or in cooperation with other agencies and business groups to provide no and low cost business training, consulting and advice.

### *Inland Empire Small Business Development Center (IESBDC)*

A cost effective way to provide this service is to partner with outside agencies that provide the type of business resource needed. Chino, Hesperia, and Rancho Cucamonga contract with the Inland Empire Small Business Development Center (IESBDC) to provide training and counseling services for small and expanding businesses. Through these contracts, business consultants establish office hours within the city to provide counseling and seminars. Examples of the subjects covered by IESBDC seminars are: starting a small business, marketing, Quick Books basics, business taxes, incorporating your business and many others.

The services of the IESBDC are available throughout San Bernardino and Riverside County but the contracts with these cities provide for set office hours, appointments and seminars within their city to make the services more accessible for their business community. These contracts also help IESBDC leverage federal funds to make sure the service can remain intact and available for little or no cost.

### *Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE)*

Another resource for business consulting is the Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE). The City of Redlands has a partnership with SCORE and its volunteers to provide one-on-one business counseling and monthly business workshops. The City provides a space for SCORE to hold counseling sessions and workshops.

### *California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC)*

The City of Redlands has another partnership to provide consulting services aimed specifically at manufacturing businesses. California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC) is a non-profit that helps manufacturing business performance through comprehensive process assessments and recommendations. The assessments are free and fees are charged to implement specific improvements.

Starting and operating a small business can be a challenge. There are many resources like the IESMDC, SCORE, and the Small Business Administration that exist to help small business formation and expansion. A city does not need to duplicate the work of these organizations but can partner with them and help make access to those existing resources easier.



### ***Tools for Business Success***

The City of Yucaipa subscribes to a non-profit resource called Tools for Business Success. This subscription links Yucaipa's website to business tools, resources and information designed by economic and business development professionals on topics such as starting your business, using networking and social media, selling to the government, and using technology in your business. Yucaipa uses this service to provide a resource that they would otherwise not be able to due to limited staff.

### ***County Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department***

Other resources available to all businesses in the County and to every city are those provided through the County Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department.

The Workforce Development Department provides business workshops throughout the year to help employers stay in business and increase employment. The workshops are free and focus on topics like finances, marketing and human resources.

Another resource provided by the County is a free human resource hotline at (800) 399-5331 that is available for businesses to call for answers to employment and labor law questions and for help with other employee related issues.

In addition to direct consulting services, agencies also use their websites to provide useful links to business resources. The County Economic Development Agency website provides information and links to incentive programs, business tools, and workforce services at:



<http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/Business-Services.aspx>

## **DEMOGRAPHIC, REAL ESTATE, MARKET AND ECONOMIC DATA**

There is one commodity that local governments possess that businesses need and that is information. Cities have information on land uses, local demographics and the local economy and this information is valuable to new and expanding businesses. This information is available in many agencies by request. The County offers "Boardroom ready" reports on the latest business, consumer spending and demographic data. The City of Redlands also offers similar data through an online Market Analysis Business Tool:



<http://www.cityofredlands.org/ds/rda/market>

A business may be interested in leasing a new location in a community and can go online, pinpoint the parcel on a map or enter an address and have a demographic and economic report generated showing information about median household income, age distribution, and the number of households with a certain distance or drive time from the location.



Important to retail businesses are traffic counts. This data is routinely collected by cities and can be made available to businesses interested in locating in the community.

The County provides site selection assistance for businesses looking to expand. They will provide customized data on properties that meet the criteria for the business and will even arrange for a site tour with real estate brokers or developers. Some cities provide online information on available buildings and land while others provide regularly updated reports.

The main point of all of these efforts is to increase access to the data you may already have. The easier it is for a business, commercial broker or location executive to find data on your community, the more likely they will be to give your community serious consideration.

## COMMUNICATING WITH BUSINESS

It is important for a local government to have the pulse of the business community to make sure their city has an environment that is conducive to business and to understand if there are any local conditions that are having a negative impact. It does no good to try and address a problem after a business has decided to close or move from your city. To be truly business friendly a city must take the time to know what is happening with business so issues can be anticipated and dealt with before a business closes its doors or moves out of town. Many cities have programs to reach out to their business community in different ways.

New business receptions are a way to welcome a new business to your community.

An entrepreneur has gone through the effort of starting a business in your community; let them know that you are glad they opened their business in your community. New business receptions are held monthly or quarterly and allow a city to thank the business for opening, to find out about the type of business they are, to introduce the new business owners to city government and departments so they know the faces and the names of the people they can turn to for help with city issues. The new business reception also allows new business owners a chance to network with each other and do some business to business marketing. It is also an opportunity to find out if the business provides products or services that your city can use so you can help them get on bidders lists and with advice on how to do business with your city.

Another way to connect is through a formal business visitation program. City staff systematically arranges visits with businesses in the community as a regular part of their weekly and monthly duties. The visit to the business allows a city to show the business they care about their success and introduce staff that the business can personally contact if they need assistance with the city. It also provides a city with an opportunity to collect data on the local economy and allows a city to gain crucial information on what they are doing right and what they could do better. This information can help a city stay in front of any potential problems and take action before a business is lost.

The City of Ontario, in partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, has formed a Business Retention Committee to be a part of their one on one business visits. The Business Retention Committee is unique in that it involves the business community and city staff in selecting the businesses to visit, in conducting the visits



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and finally in formulating follow-up actions. This gives the city a broader perspective as they work to keep the businesses they have.

Yucaipa has also partnered with their chamber of commerce for a business visitation program. The City Manager or the Community Development Director set aside time each month with the President of the Yucaipa Chamber of Commerce to visit businesses together. This started during a construction project in the business district as a way to keep the business owners informed but has continued and been expanded throughout the city.

The County Workforce Development Department has a Business Resource Team with representatives assigned to different geographic areas of the County. These representatives visit businesses each month to provide recruitment and job training assistance but also to survey the businesses to see how they are doing.

## FILMING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

San Bernardino County has many unique locations that filmmakers love to use. The City of Big Bear Lake is home to some of those locations and has created, in cooperation with the Inland Empire Film Commission (IEFC), a Filming Assistance Program to provide assistance to production companies and help attract more location shooting and its related economic impact. The program consists of a specific staff person assigned to help the production company find locations, satisfy hospitality and logistical needs, secure permits and field support during filming. The IEFC is a division of the Inland Empire Economic Partnership and is available to provide similar filming assistance throughout San Bernardino County and its cities.



<http://filminlandempire.com/home.htm>

## DIRECT BUSINESS ASSISTANCE



Another way that some local governments help business is by providing economic incentives directly or indirectly as a conduit to other sources of funding. The best practice is to know what direct assistance programs are available and know when they are appropriate for a particular business. In addition, with the loss of redevelopment, agencies must be much more creative if they are going to provide direct business assistance.

# DIRECT BUSINESS ASSISTANCE BEST PRACTICES ●●●●●●●●●●

## ***Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ)***

Local agencies can take advantage of this program by CalRecycle which combines recycling with economic development to fuel new businesses, expand existing ones, create jobs, and divert waste from landfills. This is primarily a marketing, technical assistance and loan program. The program provides loans at attractive rates, technical assistance and free product marketing to businesses that use materials from the waste stream to manufacture their products. There are several RMDZs that cover almost all of San Bernardino County.

## ***Building Permit Fee Waivers for Energy-Efficient Systems***

In this County program, businesses are given an incentive for projects that make an existing building more energy efficient. A building owner that is upgrading to a more efficient HVAC system or adding solar panels can have up to \$5,000 of the building permit fee waived. This makes it more attractive for a business to make an investment that will lower their monthly operating costs and help the bottom line.

## ***Economic Development Electrical Rate***

Rancho Cucamonga has a municipal utility and they leverage that fact to aid new business growth. The City's municipal utility provides discounts to new qualifying electric customers, which can help to offset startup or relocation costs. The special rate is available to customers projected to have high energy demands. A recent example of this incentive being used was for a food processing company that used large refrigeration equipment. The cost savings received from this incentive helped offset the company's startup costs

that helped to tip the scales in Rancho Cucamonga's favor when the company decided to relocate.

## ***Microenterprise Assistance Grant***

The City of Redlands began this program to provide grants from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to eligible businesses that want to establish a new business or expand an existing business in the City of Redlands. This is a grant program and does not need to be repaid as long as all of the terms of the program are met. The City established the program with funds from their Community Development Block Grant funds.

## ***Economic Development Loan Program***

The City of Redlands established this program to provide loans from \$25,000 to \$150,000 to eligible businesses that want to establish a new business or expand an existing business in the City of Redlands. The loan must be 100% collateralized and be personally guaranteed by the borrower. The program is funded from the Community Development Block Grant funds the City receives.

## ***Building Facade Program***

The City of Yucaipa has a building façade program to provide grants to businesses in targeted areas of the community for the purpose of upgrading the façade of their building to match the theme of that specific target area. The business is able to give their building an attractive facelift which helps improve the visibility and appeal of their business. This program was part of the Yucaipa Redevelopment Agency but Yucaipa has kept the program going even after the elimination of redevelopment.

# APPENDIX

## *Program Contact Information*

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY	CONTACT
<b>Customer Service</b>		
Formal Customer Service Procedure	Adelanto	Onyx Jones, Interim Finance Director (760) 246-2300 x3036 <a href="mailto:ojones@ci.adelanto.ca.us">ojones@ci.adelanto.ca.us</a>
<b>Development Processing</b>		
One Stop Permit Center	Big Bear Lake	Jim Miller, Community Development Director (909) 866-5831
Building Concierge Service	Big Bear Lake	Phil Mosley, Building Official (909) 866-5831
e-Plan Web-Based Plan Submittals	County	Gia Kim, Assistant Director, Land Use Services (909) 252-5105 <a href="mailto:Gia.Kim@lus.sbcounty.gov">Gia.Kim@lus.sbcounty.gov</a>
Pre-Application Development Review/Strike Team	County	Terri Rahhal, Planning Director (909) 252-5224 <a href="mailto:terri.rahhal@lus.sbcounty.gov">terri.rahhal@lus.sbcounty.gov</a>
"Jump Start" Pre-Development Meetings	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Economic Development Committee Pre-Development Review	Yucaipa	Paul Toomey, Community Development Director (909) 797-2489 x247 <a href="mailto:ptoomey@yucaipa.org">ptoomey@yucaipa.org</a>
Development Review Process Analysis	Hesperia	Mike Podegracz, City Manager (760) 947-1224 <a href="mailto:mpodegracz@cityofhesperia.us">mpodegracz@cityofhesperia.us</a>
Development Services Staff Co-Location	Apple Valley	Lori Lamson, Community Development Director (760) 240-7000 <a href="mailto:llamson@applevalley.org">llamson@applevalley.org</a>
Free Pre-Development Application Review	Highland	John Jaquess, Community Development Director (909) 864-6861 x213 <a href="mailto:jjaquess@cityofhighland.org">jjaquess@cityofhighland.org</a>
Project Tracking & Expediting	Highland	John Jaquess, Community Development Director (909) 864-6861 x213 <a href="mailto:jjaquess@cityofhighland.org">jjaquess@cityofhighland.org</a>
Public Counter Staff Training	Highland	John Jaquess, Community Development Director (909) 864-6861 x213 <a href="mailto:jjaquess@cityofhighland.org">jjaquess@cityofhighland.org</a>

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY	CONTACT
Fast Track Entitlement Process	Rancho Cucamonga	Flavio Nunez, Management Analyst (909) 477-2700 <a href="mailto:Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us">Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us</a>
One Stop Permit Center	Redlands	Robert Dalquest, Assistant Director Development Services (909) 798-7555 <a href="mailto:rdalquest@cityofredlands.org">rdalquest@cityofredlands.org</a>
<b>Business Attraction/Retention</b>		
Rancho Advantage – Attraction/ Retention Program	Rancho Cucamonga	Flavio Nunez, Management Analyst (909) 477-2700 <a href="mailto:Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us">Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us</a>
Opportunity High Desert	Adelanto, Apple Valley, Barstow, Hesperia, Victorville	Frank Robinson, Apple Valley Town Manager (760) 240-7000 <a href="mailto:FRobinson@applevalley.org">FRobinson@applevalley.org</a>
Filming Assistance Program	Big Bear Lake, Inland Empire Film Commission	Cheri Haggerty, Communication Director (909) 866-5831 Sheri Davis, Director (951) 377-7849 <a href="mailto:sheridavis@filminlandempire.com">sheridavis@filminlandempire.com</a>
Business Resource Center	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Available Site/Building Database	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Current Demographic Information	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Annual New Business Reception	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Network with Commercial Brokers	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Participation with Chamber of Commerce	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Demographic, Market and Economic Data	County – Economic Development Agency	Soua Vang, Economic Development Coordinator (909) 387-4385 <a href="mailto:svang@ed.sbcounty.gov">svang@ed.sbcounty.gov</a>
Industry Specific Reports	County – Economic Development Agency	Soua Vang, Economic Development Coordinator (909) 387-4385 <a href="mailto:svang@ed.sbcounty.gov">svang@ed.sbcounty.gov</a>
GIS Mapping	County – Economic Development Agency	Alex Holsheimer, Economic Development Coordinator (909) 387-4385 <a href="mailto:aholsheimer@ed.sbcounty.gov">aholsheimer@ed.sbcounty.gov</a>
Business Retention Monthly Visits and Surveys	County – Workforce Development Department	Brad Gates, Deputy Director (909) 387-9802 <a href="mailto:bgates@wdd.sbcounty.gov">bgates@wdd.sbcounty.gov</a>

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY	CONTACT
Business Workshops	County – Workforce Development Department	Brad Gates, Deputy Director (909) 387-9802 <a href="mailto:bgates@wdd.sbcounty.gov">bgates@wdd.sbcounty.gov</a>
Human Resources Hotline	County – Workforce Development Department	Brad Gates, Deputy Director (909) 387-9802 <a href="mailto:bgates@wdd.sbcounty.gov">bgates@wdd.sbcounty.gov</a>
Employment Resources Centers	County – Workforce Development Department	Miguel McQueen, Deputy Director (909) 387-9885 <a href="mailto:mmcqueen@wdd.sbcounty.gov">mmcqueen@wdd.sbcounty.gov</a>
Participation with Chamber of Commerce	Highland	John Jaquess, Community Development Director (909) 864-6861 x213 <a href="mailto:jjaquess@cityofhighland.org">jjaquess@cityofhighland.org</a>
Community Festivals	Highland	John Jaquess, Community Development Director (909) 864-6861 x213 <a href="mailto:jjaquess@cityofhighland.org">jjaquess@cityofhighland.org</a>
Economic Development Website <a href="http://economicdevelopment.cityofhighland.org/">http://economicdevelopment.cityofhighland.org/</a>	Highland	John Jaquess, Community Development Director (909) 864-6861 x213 <a href="mailto:jjaquess@cityofhighland.org">jjaquess@cityofhighland.org</a>
Business Retention Committee	Ontario	Tanya Spiegel, Economic Development Coordinator (909) 395-2081 <a href="mailto:tspiegel@ci.ontario.ca.us">tspiegel@ci.ontario.ca.us</a>
Business Attraction Website <a href="http://www.ontariothinksbusiness.com/">http://www.ontariothinksbusiness.com/</a>	Ontario	Christopher Kennedy, Economic Development Coordinator (909) 395-2472 <a href="mailto:ckennedy@ci.ontario.ca.us">ckennedy@ci.ontario.ca.us</a>
Small Business Development Center	Rancho Cucamonga, Inland Empire Small Business Development Center	Flavio Nunez, Management Analyst (909) 477-2700 <a href="mailto:Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us">Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us</a> Vincent McCoy, Director 951-781-2345 <a href="mailto:vmccoy@iesmallbusiness.com">vmccoy@iesmallbusiness.com</a>
Tourism Marketing District	Rancho Cucamonga, Ontario, Ontario Convention Center & Visitors Bureau	Michael Krouse, President & CEO - Ontario Convention Center & Visitors Bureau (909) 937-3001 <a href="mailto:mkrouse@ontariocvb.com">mkrouse@ontariocvb.com</a>
California Manufacturing Technology Consulting Services	Redlands	Mike Nelson, Economic Development Manager (909) 335-4755 <a href="mailto:mnelson@cityofredlands.org">mnelson@cityofredlands.org</a>
Site Selection Assistance	Redlands	Mike Nelson, Economic Development Manager (909) 335-4755 <a href="mailto:mnelson@cityofredlands.org">mnelson@cityofredlands.org</a>
Online Market Analysis Tool <a href="http://www.cityofredlands.org/ds/rda/market">http://www.cityofredlands.org/ds/rda/market</a>	Redlands	Janet Miller, Project Manager (909) 335-4415 <a href="mailto:jmiller@cityofredlands.org">jmiller@cityofredlands.org</a>

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY	CONTACT
SCORE Business Consulting and Workshops	Redlands	Heather Smith, Project Manager (909) 798-7629 <a href="mailto:hsmith@cityofredlands.org">hsmith@cityofredlands.org</a>
Business Visitation Program	Redlands	Mike Nelson, Economic Development Manager (909) 335-4755 <a href="mailto:mnelson@cityofredlands.org">mnelson@cityofredlands.org</a>
Business Visitation Program	Yucaipa	Paul Toomey, Community Development Director (909) 797-2489 x247 <a href="mailto:ptoomey@yucaipa.org">ptoomey@yucaipa.org</a>
Chamber of Commerce Partnership – Workshops	Yucaipa	Paul Toomey, Community Development Director (909) 797-2489 x247 <a href="mailto:ptoomey@yucaipa.org">ptoomey@yucaipa.org</a>
Online Business Tools <a href="http://www.yucaipa.org/cityDepartments/communityDevelopment/information.php">http://www.yucaipa.org/cityDepartments/communityDevelopment/information.php</a>	Yucaipa	Paul Toomey, Community Development Director (909) 797-2489 x247 <a href="mailto:ptoomey@yucaipa.org">ptoomey@yucaipa.org</a>
<b>Direct Business Assistance</b>		
Chino Valley Recycling Market Development Zone	Chino	Cruz Esparza IV, Business Development Manager <a href="mailto:cesparza@cityofchino.org">cesparza@cityofchino.org</a>
Recycling Market Development Zone	County – Economic Development Agency	Alex Holsheimer, Economic Development Coordinator (909) 387-4385 <a href="mailto:aholsheimer@ed.sbcounty.gov">aholsheimer@ed.sbcounty.gov</a>
Building Permit Fee Waivers for Energy Efficiency	County	Gia Kim, Assistant Director, Land Use Services (909) 252-5105 <a href="mailto:Gia.Kim@lus.sbcounty.gov">Gia.Kim@lus.sbcounty.gov</a>
Economic Development Electrical Rate	Rancho Cucamonga	Flavio Nunez, Management Analyst (909) 477-2700 <a href="mailto:Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us">Flavio.Nunez@cityofrc.us</a>
Microenterprise Assistance Grant	Redlands	Janet Miller, CDBG Program Manager (909) 335-4415 <a href="mailto:jmiller@cityofredlands.org">jmiller@cityofredlands.org</a>
Economic Development Loan Program	Redlands	Janet Miller, CDBG Program Manager (909) 335-4415 <a href="mailto:jmiller@cityofredlands.org">jmiller@cityofredlands.org</a>
Building Façade Program	Yucaipa	Paul Toomey, Community Development Director (909) 797-2489 x247 <a href="mailto:ptoomey@yucaipa.org">ptoomey@yucaipa.org</a>



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