

Economic Development 101

What is Economic Development?

The definition for Economic Development according to the International [Economic Development Council](#) is ... *creation of jobs and wealth, and the improvement of quality of life. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well being of a community.* There are many other definitions including:

“...refers to the deliberate effort to improve the economy of a specified geographic area, which can be as large as an entire nation-state or as limited as a city neighborhood.”

[Centre for Community Enterprise](#)

“...local economic development (LED) is to build up the economic capacity of a local area to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public, business and nongovernmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation.”

[The World Bank](#)

“...a program, group of policies, or activity that seeks to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community.”

[Learning to Lead, Forman & Mooney](#)

Your community should define economic development based on its particular needs and expectations. Once defined specific programs can be developed to respond to your community's needs and a variety of approaches can be taken into account to create an effective economic development program including:

- Create and maintain a local investment and business environment
- Support small and medium enterprises (SME)
- Encourage the formation of new business and foster entrepreneurship
- Attraction of external businesses and investment
- Invest in hard infrastructure and build capacity
- Invest in soft infrastructure (i.e. workforce development, educational support, regulatory issues)
- Support the growth of specific industry clusters
- Target specific areas of the community for revitalization programs or projects

