



Summarization of May 2020 EDC Sustainability Survey

The following information is intended to provide a streamlined summarization of the 32 individual responses received in reply to an EDC sustainability survey distributed in May 2020.

1. What is your organization doing in terms of COVID-19 response?

- 100.00% conducting traditional economic development work
- 93.75% helping businesses navigate state and federal programs
- 65.63% helping businesses interpret government policies (waivers, re-open guidance, red / yellow / green)
- 43.75% created a loan or grant fund to assist businesses
- 34.38% developed a marketing campaign to promote local businesses
- 31.25% other (including offering borrowers temporary loan payment deferrals; lobbying for CARES funds; developing and/or serving on a recovery task force for the county; creation of a COVID-19 resource webpage; creation of an interactive Open for Business web portal; utilization of incubator 3D printers for PPE; email updates to businesses; creation of a reopening guideline resource that collates OSHA, CDC and other sources' weblinks into a single reference to include industry-specific guidance; tracking new metrics to report to the community on immediate economic impacts; and hosting virtual meetings by occupation)
- 6.25% bulk purchase of PPE on behalf of businesses
- 0.00% dissemination of tests (antibody or active virus)

2. What are your community's plans as it pertains to utilization of CARES Act funding for economic development purposes?

- 46.88% *Yes*, my community expects to utilize some dedicated CARES Act funding for economic development purposes and some of these efforts will be facilitated by my organization.
- 28.13% *Yes*, my community expects to utilize some dedicated CARES Act funding for economic development purposes, but none of these efforts will be facilitated by my organization.
- 9.38% *No*, my community does not expect to utilize any dedicated CARES Act funding for economic development purposes.

Survey participants responding "Yes" to this question were asked to provide details regarding how this funding is expected to be utilized. While a number of respondents didn't yet have definitive information to provide, other comments referenced plans to create a working capital grant program; to fund a revolving loan program; to conduct a feasibility study; to achieve infrastructure goals (i.e., broadband access in rural areas); to supplement an existing loan program created to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses; to conduct a demolition project; to construct new manufacturing / warehouse space; to provide funding to hospitals and social services organizations; to purchase a device to sanitize playground equipment; etc.

3. Which of the following options most closely reflects your organization's experience as it pertains to the COVID-19 crisis?

- 56.25% *No, my organization has not had to furlough / lay off full-time economic development employees and is adequately staffed.*
- 37.50% *No, my organization has not had to furlough / lay off full-time economic development employees, but it is understaffed.*
- 6.25% *Yes, my organization has had to furlough / lay off full-time economic development employees. Prior to this, our organization was already understaffed.*
- 0.00% *Yes, my organization has had to furlough / lay off full-time economic development employees. Prior to this, our organization was adequately staffed.*

Among the comments received in reply to this question, several focused on decisions to not fill vacant positions due to uncertainty (caused, at least in part, by the COVID-19 crisis); one cited the cause of a furlough as a responsibility to donors to preserve their contributions to meet the organization's mission; one cited needing to lay off their receptionist; and one advised that though they hadn't yet furloughed anyone, the possibility could be revisited.

4. If your organization responded affirmatively to the previous question, how many full-time economic development employees has your organization had to furlough / lay off?

Each of the organizations that responded they'd had to furlough / lay off full-time economic development employees advised they had furloughed / laid off exactly one such employee.

5. How many full-time economic development employees are currently on your staff (excluding any individuals who have been furloughed / laid off)?

Recognizing there are some variables in how survey participants responded to this question, responses have been laid out, as received, in descending order.

- 23
- 16 FT and 1 PT
- 13, including an 8 person Tourism promotion (CVB) team.
- 12 ED employees and 4 Utilities and Facility
- 11
- 10
- 8
- 7
- 5 and 4 part-time.
- 5 (3 instances)
- 4 (3 instances)
- 3 (4 instances)
- 2 1/2
- 2 (5 instances)
- 2 staff - 1 ED
- 1

6. Which of the following options most closely reflects the length of time your organization currently expects it could effectively sustain its operations through existing income streams and / or utilization of reserves?

- 40.63% more than 24 months
- 21.88% between 6 months and 12 months
- 21.88% between 12 months and 18 months
- 15.63% between 18 months and 24 months
- 0.00% less than 6 months

7. Where can PEDA help to meet your crisis- and recovery-related training needs?

Beyond the following, bulleted training-related needs, some survey participants' responses included getting businesses opened up; securing the release of funds directly to EDCs or counties with populations below 500K that didn't receive direct CARES funds; pursuing line item funding to assist IDCs / CEDOs with annual funding for operations and funding stream to sustain economic development activities at the local level; the reopening of facility grant programs (e.g., IDP); and securing funding to support training for organizations and their communities.

- Establish a forum for collaboration with other regions on strategies (both organizational strategy and programmatic)
- Guidance on interpreting all the data to allow for well-informed decisions
- Policies and supplies needed for multi-tenant buildings
- Lease amendments needed to handle and prevent a virus
- Identification / Explanation of rapidly evolving federal / state / private funding / programming opportunities
- Helping business communities understand and respond to the "new norm" (What does it look like? Where are the opportunities? Etc.)
- Private and federal grant writing
- Consolidation planning
- Strategies for community and small business rebuilding (e.g., e-commerce support, Main Street types of programs, etc.)
- Supporting large employers with workforce projections
- Avoiding business liability upon reopening

8. In what creative ways is your organization – or a partner organization – serving your community's needs?

- Took an "all-hands-on-deck" approach to assist small businesses with applications for emergency financial assistance.
- Joined a multi-agency regional initiative to collect donations of personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line, care-giving organizations including county nursing homes, prisons, providers of social services, and public health organizations.
- Added a COVID-19 resources page to include new resources and reflect rapidly evolving information
- Developed and issued a pulse survey on the immediate economic impacts of the business slowdown and the most urgent needs of our region's businesses
- Adopted new metrics, including weekly initial unemployment claims, weekly new job postings, the number of businesses categorized as "life-sustaining" by the governor's office and the number of people working in "essential" occupations as ways to track and report to the community on immediate economic impacts
- Being a resource of information to our business community has become paramount. There is so much confusion and misinformation being shared that our businesses need a place for answers.
- Called our members and asked if they needed help (i.e., PIDA loans).
- Promoted and bought services and items from our members.
- Deferred rental payments, upon request.
- Social media, promotion of restaurants open for pick up or curbside service. Outdoor activity promotion.
- Developed a local emergency food distribution system that integrated local food products, helping sustain some local food producers while providing healthier foods
- Connected our incubator's prototyping technology and the local maker community enabled us to provide PPE to the local hospital and other social assistance entities.
- Initiated a micro-loan program, funded by donations, for use by small retail businesses and restaurants
- Created a Covid-19 Task Force to keep industries informed of the latest crises details by representatives of the local hospital and government leaders
- Provided business webinars through our incubator, in cooperation with Penn State
- Partnered with banks to create an emergency relief loan fund
- Applying via EDA to fund a Startup RLF program

- PEDDA can partner with existing EDCs to own and operate multitenant facilities
- Working with our Visitors Bureau to educate and promote businesses in our county, including provision of a map of businesses that are either able to operate or are only able to offer take-out food
- Full cooperation with all private and public agencies working off the same page. Not necessarily creative but absolutely required.
- Provided technical assistance to small businesses
- Workforce assistance to help recruit/retain/train talent
- Attempting to re-purpose ARC grant funding to purchase PPE and related supplies
- Training for small business re-opening