

PREPARATION

The following is an overview of the steps required to prepare a CEDS, including recommended participants and the role of EDA. For more information on any step in the process of preparing a CEDS, please contact your appropriate EDA regional office (see <http://www.eda.gov/contact/>).

The preparation of a CEDS will depend on local circumstances, the organization's staff capacity, and level of resources of the region. The time it takes to develop an effective process will vary depending on the area's experience with economic development, the complexity of its problems, and the degree of coordination and cooperation among the participant stakeholders.

A key element in the process is the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (Strategy Committee).¹ Established by the planning organization, the Strategy Committee is the principal facilitator of the CEDS process and is responsible for developing and updating the CEDS. The Strategy Committee should broadly represent the main economic interests of the region.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As previously noted, a CEDS emerges from a continuing planning process developed with broad based and diverse stakeholder participation that addresses the economic problems and potential of a region. The CEDS should include information about how and to what extent stakeholder input and support was solicited. Information on how the planning organization collaborated with its diverse set of stakeholders (including the public sector, private interests, non-profits, educational institutions, and community organizations) in the development of the CEDS and the formation of the Strategy Committee should be documented. For updated CEDS, information on how these critical stakeholder groups contributed to the plan's implementation should be noted. Documented evidence of these strategic partnerships strengthens a CEDS by demonstrating the commitment of local partners to coordinate work and investment across the region, helps to effectively target local funds and private sector resources, and legitimizes the CEDS as a product representing the region as a whole. Information should also be included that describes the planning organization's efforts to regularly engage partners and stakeholders on monitoring progress on the CEDS and to keep the plan both current and relevant.

Planners should take care to build stakeholder participation and buy-in for long term planning initiatives. Stakeholders need to understand how they fit into the picture of regional economic competitiveness and, more important, how engagement in a CEDS process will benefit their communities and organizations.

Consider using the CEDS as an opportunity to illustrate how the region's stakeholders are linked together. Illustrate the business to business linkages (clusters, supplier networks, value chains) and the social connections (social networks, places of worship, investor relationships). In addition, consider identifying opportunities for short-term, medium-term, and long-term activities in the CEDS. Stakeholder engagement can be maintained effectively and expanded to new stakeholders through short-term "wins."

Recommended Resource: *Innovate Kansas* <http://innovatekansas.org/>.

The steps below apply only to EDA-funded planning grantees (e.g., EDDs and Native American tribes):

Step 1: Establish and maintain an Economic Development Strategy Committee (Strategy Committee) to oversee the CEDS process. It is recommended that members of the Strategy Committee be listed in the CEDS.

Step 2: Define the Strategy Committee's role and relationships.

Step 3: Leverage staff resources.

Step 4: Adopt a program of work.

Step 5: Seek stakeholder input. Craft the initial CEDS document and solicit and address public comments (per 13 C.F.R. § 303.6).

Step 6: Finalize CEDS document.

Step 7: Submit a CEDS Annual Performance Report.

Step 8: Revise/update the CEDS (at least every five years).

You can and should contact your EDA regional office staff at any point in this process for general technical assistance and advice. The regional office staff can help with EDA approval of the CEDS and with the annual reports.

Economic development organizations are encouraged to work with and make use of other EDA programs such as University Centers, Local Technical Assistance, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Economic Adjustment Assistance. EDA regional office staff can provide current information on accessing these programs, as well as other non-EDA programs and that may be useful in the development and implementation of the CEDS.

1 Establishment of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee is a requirement only for EDA funded EDDs and Native American tribes.