

Draft Agenda – Subject to change

DAY ONE – SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2025

8:00 - Welcome and Obtain your CEDP.BC Designation – Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO

8:15 – 10:15 - Foundations of Ethical Economic Development: Navigating the First 90 Days

Speaker: Deklan Corstanje, Manager of Economic Development, City of Prince George

Embarking on a journey in the field of economic development can be both exhilarating and challenging. This session is designed to provide you with invaluable insights, strategies, and tools that will empower you during the crucial early phase of your economic development role. We'll delve into the fundamental principles that underpin effective economic development practices, equipping you with the knowledge and skills to make a meaningful impact from day one. In addition to the core topics, we will also address the critical aspect of economic development ethics. You'll learn about the ethical considerations that are integral to responsible economic development, ensuring that your initiatives align with the highest ethical standards. Join us for an engaging and informative session that will set you on a path to success in economic development, all while emphasizing the importance of ethical practices. Your first 90 days in this field will be transformed into a solid foundation for a rewarding career.

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 12:30 Economic Development Strategic Planning

Speaker: Amber Hunter, Vice President, Business Development, Research FDI

This session covers the intricacies of strategic planning in economic development. Participants will also learn the quantitative techniques used to better understand their community and explore project assessment methods for setting priorities and measuring their plan's impact.

12:30 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15 – 3:15 Unleashing the Power of Data: Discovering Economic Development Insights through Data Analysis

Speaker: Jamie Vann Struth, Deloitte

Statistics serve as a crucial tool in economic development, aiding in various aspects such as responding to inquiries and showcasing return on investment. In this session, new and experienced participants will gain practical insights on how to discover and effectively utilize statistics in their day-to-day economic development responsibilities. Through interactive discussions and demonstrations, attendees will learn the best practices for finding reliable statistical data and leveraging it to enhance their decision-making processes. Whether it's assessing economic trends, evaluating market opportunities, or measuring the

impact of development initiatives, this session will equip participants with the knowledge and skills to harness the power of statistics in achieving successful economic outcomes.

3:15 – 3:30 Break

3:30 – 5:30 Building Enterprising and Vibrant Communities through Business Engagement

Speaker: Colleen Bond and Dale Wheeldon, BCEDA

Business retention and expansion is a core component of any economic development program, in addition to efforts to attract new businesses and encourage the creation of new businesses. It is more than a survey – it is a variety of efforts taken to assist businesses in an effort to keep them from relocating to other areas, help them survive economic difficulties, assist them with expansions that add new jobs, and increase their competitiveness in the wider marketplace. The focus is thus on existing companies, which form the local or regional economic base. Studies have shown that the businesses already existing in a community are responsible for up to 80 % of all net local employment, and a significant percentage of cities consider business retention and expansion programs a primary mission.

DAY TWO – MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025

8:30 – 10:00 Entrepreneurship and Small Business

Speaker: TBD

This session explains the importance of building a community centred around entrepreneurship, small business creation, sustainability, and growth. Participants will also learn how to identify resource gaps, understand the importance of inclusion, and develop practical ways to measure success. What partners do you work with? How do you measure the success of the programs you create? do you work with? How do you measure the success of the programs you create?

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15 – 12:15 Economic Development Marketing

Speaker: Alissa Sklar, Ph.D., Sklar Consulting

How well do you understand your community's value proposition? How effectively can you communicate it to potential investors and existing businesses in a crowded global marketplace? Companies and organizations researching locations need accurate, up-to-date, and credible information, so economic developers need rock-solid marketing techniques to reach the right people and address the strategic needs of their business community. Course participants will be able to learn how to craft their community's message, use the right tools to reach the right targets, optimize their use of LinkedIn for business development, understand current trends in site selection and more. What kinds of incentives, tools and tactics are best used to secure strategic investment? Case studies and sample FDI strategies

Economic Development Leadership Learning Exchange



will highlight the dos and don'ts of economic development marketing and attraction. Participants will complete this session with materials for fine-tuning their organization's value proposition and elevator pitch.

12:15 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15 – 3:15 Igniting Resilience: FIREd Up Preparedness for Disasters

Speakers: Colleen Bond and Dale Wheeldon

We will ignite a dynamic conversation about enhancing economic resilience in the face of disasters, particularly focusing on fire-related emergencies. Through interactive discussions, on-the-ground examples, and expert insights, participants will explore innovative strategies to fortify local economies and support communities during and after disasters. Join us to spark new ideas and approaches that will empower you to rethink disaster preparedness and foster economic sustainability in vulnerable regions.

3:15 – 3:30 Break

3:30 – 5:30 Tourism and Economic Development

Speaker: TBD

Tourism is a key driver of economic activity and plays a vital role in the diversification and resilience of local economies. This session will provide an in-depth look at tourism's contribution to community economic development, including an overview of the current state of the tourism sector, the key players involved, and the impact of tourism on local economies and community well-being.

Participants will explore how Economic Development Officers (EDOs) can collaborate with tourism stakeholders and Indigenous communities to support strong tourism governance, encourage sustainable development, and take an active leadership role in advancing tourism as part of broader economic development strategies.

The session will also focus on tourism investment attraction—how to assess a community's potential for tourism investment, identify suitable types of tourism development, understand investor priorities, and prepare for long-term investment readiness. In addition, we'll review available funding programs and initiatives that support tourism development, particularly in the areas of marketing and promotion.

Through interactive activities and discussions, participants will evaluate their community's tourism assets, identify opportunities for growth, and consider strategies to strengthen their local tourism economy and attract investment.

RECEPTION

DAY THREE – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025

8:30 – 10:00 Understanding Business Finance

Speaker: TBD

A strong grasp of business finance is essential for Economic Development Officers (EDOs) working with entrepreneurs, small businesses, and investment prospects. This session will provide participants with the foundational knowledge needed to understand and interpret key financial documents, support business planning, and confidently assist clients navigating financial challenges or opportunities.

Participants will learn how to read and analyze core financial statements—such as income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements—to assess business performance and identify potential red flags or opportunities. The session will also explore the key components of a solid business plan, including financial projections, funding needs, and operational planning.

By demystifying business finance, this session will better equip EDOs to offer meaningful guidance to local businesses, connect them with the right resources, and strengthen their communities' business support ecosystems. Practical exercises and real-world examples will help reinforce financial concepts and build confidence in applying them to economic development work.

Whether reviewing a business plan for a grant application or supporting a start-up in need of financial advice, EDOs will leave this session with tools and insights to help businesses succeed.

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:15 – 12:00 Understanding Different Government Programs and How to Use Them

Speaker: TBD

Economic developers play a critical role in connecting businesses and communities with the support they need to grow and thrive. This session will provide a practical overview of the wide range of government programs available at the federal, provincial, and regional levels—and how to effectively navigate, access, and leverage them.

Participants will explore funding programs, tax incentives, workforce development initiatives, infrastructure supports, and innovation and export programs designed to assist businesses, non-profits, Indigenous communities, and local governments. The session will also examine strategies for identifying the most relevant programs for different types of clients and community needs.

Through discussion and case examples, EDOs will gain insight into how to interpret program eligibility, support clients with applications, and build relationships with program administrators. The session will also highlight how government programs can be integrated into broader economic development strategies and how to stay up to date on changing funding landscapes.

Economic Development Leadership Learning Exchange



By the end of this session, participants will be better prepared to act as informed connectors—helping local businesses and organizations make the most of available government supports.

12:15 Bagged Lunch

12:15 – 3:15 PM Community Action Projects

In this final session, delegates will be sent into the community to implement Community Action Projects. These projects are designed to put into practice the key concepts and strategies learned during the three days of training. Participants will work in teams to address real-world challenges, applying their new skills to make a tangible impact on local economic development. This hands-on experience will reinforce learning and foster collaboration, preparing delegates to drive positive change in their own communities.

3:15 – 4:00 – Delegates return and prepare for reporting back and recommendations.

4:00 – 5:00 PM Community Action Projects – Reporting