



University of Oregon Economic Development Center

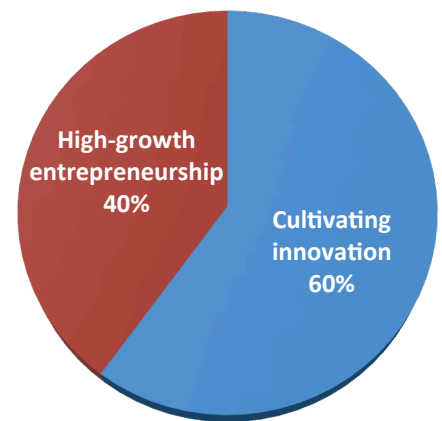
University of Oregon Economic Development Center

The University of Oregon Economic Development Center (UOEDC) aims to link University of Oregon (UO) resources with communities for the purpose of enhancing regional sustainable economic development – especially in distressed communities throughout the state. The Center especially focuses on local job creation and entrepreneurship in the following areas: (1) agriculture and local food systems; (2) renewable and distributed energy systems; (3) sustainable infrastructure (water, wastewater, transportation, and other public services); and (4) value-added wood products.

Activities

A foundation of UOEDC’s approach is building local capacity in communities to set strong, forward-looking policies, develop collaborative networks, and mobilize new investment resources. Program delivery incorporates a strong service learning component, and students are involved in all Center activities. For example, the Center provides technical assistance to rural areas

through the RARE program, which places 20-25 students in rural communities each year to complete economic development projects. The Center supports a variety of community-initiated demonstration projects via teams of graduate students/faculty working on feasibility studies, financial analysis, public facility plans, and other efforts. The Center has a Latino Business Development initiative that includes a range of



technical assistance and applied research services, such as researching the impacts of Latino businesses on community development. Other areas of focus include disaster preparedness assistance for communities and support for communities to implement electric vehicle development and the

University

University of Oregon

Center Director

Robert Parker

Center Location

Outreach Unity

Center since 2009

Center Activities

- Technical assistance
- Entrepreneurship support
- Innovation support
- Applied research

Clients

- Local governments
- Indian tribes
- Existing businesses

Assessment Techniques

- Client interviews
- Client surveys
- Case studies
- Program staff feedback

Contact Information

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“Drive Oregon” initiative. Other UOEDC technical assistance and applied research services support specific local- and state-level economic development projects, such as developing a regional innovation and accelerator network, evaluating the impacts of a free parking program, and evaluating economic impacts of the state’s ski industry.

Leveraging

UOEDC delivers its services through a collaboration of the University of Oregon Community Service Center;

Department of Economics; Oregon Small Business Development Center Network; faculty/students from the UO Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management; and other UO departments. In addition to leveraging university data sources, analytical expertise, and student labor, the Center makes use of federal-university programs such as RARE (Americorps) and the Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience (FEMA). The Center has a long history of working with regional, state, and

national economic development stakeholders including: EDA, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Economic Development Association, Oregon EDDs, Councils of Government, local governments, and Rural Development Initiatives.

“Access to students was great. Lots of great new ideas, but also core research ability to complete the identified questions. Great collaboration.”

--Center Client

Success

Latino Small Business Development

In many Oregon communities, Latino-owned businesses have been rapidly emerging in neighborhoods that were experiencing economic difficulties, contributing to the revitalization of these areas. UOEDC is seeking to support this emerging minority business community and understand its economic contribution in rural communities through a Latino Small Business Development initiative. In the first phase of the project, UOEDC partnered with the City of Woodburn to complete a detailed analysis of the community and economic impacts of Latino-owned businesses in the downtown district. Research efforts included a literature review on issues facing Latino businesses, data collection on

the number and location of these businesses in the state, and interviews with experts/practitioners in the field of Latino small business development. In the City of Woodburn, more than 20 local business owners and community representatives were also interviewed. This research identified the barriers and opportunities for further development of Latino business enterprises in Woodburn. The project culminated with a presentation to Woodburn business leaders and city officials. Findings from this initial phase of work are informing the approach for UOEDC’s ongoing strategy to assist Latino businesses, such as having Latino interns/faculty participate in delivery of technical assistance programs to the Latino community.

By developing a technical assistance program that specifically targets the needs of a minority business community in the state, UOEDC is ensuring that needed resources and assistance are delivered to meet the unique needs of businesses that are contributing to rural community revitalization and growth.