



Maine Center for Business and Economic Research

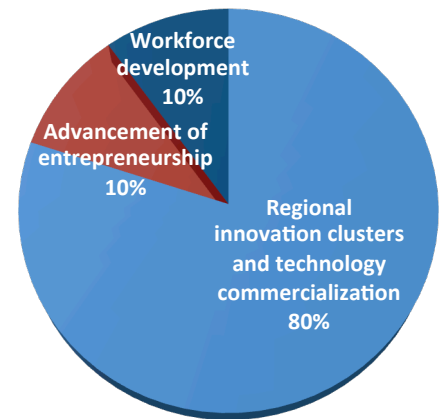
Maine Center for Business and Economic Research

The University of Southern Maine's Maine Center for Business and Economic Research (MCBER) focuses on monitoring, assessing, and identifying opportunities to support the development and growth of regional innovation clusters and technology commercialization. The Center strives to contribute to the advancement of entrepreneurship by identifying gaps in regional ecosystems, some of which can serve as attractive investment opportunities for entrepreneurs and workforce development organizations. The Center is supported by the grant, the University, local governments, and fees for services.

Activities

The Center is working with the Economic Development Districts and the Maine Technology Institute on the Mobilize Maine Cluster Development project, which focuses on supporting the planning and implementation needs of Maine's seven economic development districts. Through surveys, the Center seeks a better understanding of the activities and

relationships that might foster cluster formation, the networks and connections that currently exist and how they may be enhanced, and the extent to which innovative new products and services are being created. In addition, the Center provides economic development assistance to the National Science Foundation-funded Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR) program



headquartered at the University of Maine. The Center helped the EPSCOR project develop a strategic plan for its economic development effort and assisted in the designation of a point person to lead the economic development efforts.

University

University of Southern Maine

Center Director

Matthew Dean

Center Location

School of Business and Muskie School of Public Service

Center since 1974

Center Activities

- Technical assistance in regional cluster building
- Connecting research to businesses
- Forecasting

Clients

- Economic development districts
- Entrepreneurs
- Existing businesses
- Local/regional/state governments
- Nonprofits

Assessment Techniques

- Informal client interviews
- Feedback at regional workshops

Contact Information

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The Center also produces several forecasts a year. The Center performs the software development and documentation of a statistical time-series forecasting system for a variety of subjects ranging from economic forecasting to traffic forecasting. In addition, the Center performs market research, statistical analysis, and strategic-planning assistance for nonprofits, along with giving several state of the economy presentations

every year.

Leveraging

The Center leverages extensively its 37-year history of delivering economic analysis and data to the public and private sectors. In addition, the Center leverages its working relations with Maine's Economic Development Districts (EDDs), E2Tech (the 700-member trade association of companies in the environment and

energy-technology and service industries), the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) and the University of Maine's Department of Industrial Cooperation. The Center leverages the University of Southern Maine's faculty, students and staff in addition to personnel from the other six campuses of the University of Maine System. The Center also uses student labor and university data sources in its projects.

Success

Evaluation of state R&D-based economic development strategies

For nearly a decade, MCBER has conducted regular evaluations of Maine's innovative programs in research and development assistance, including programs that directly funded R&D activities and which seek to spur the growth of innovation clusters in Maine's economy. The Center developed and implemented an online reporting system to track the activities of nearly 300 recipients of state support from the Maine Technology Institute and provided four

evaluation reports to the legislature of the state's R&D assistance. The Center also conducted three separate detailed evaluations of the cluster enhancement program administered by the Institute. The evaluations of the grant programs led to the legislature continuing to support these economic development efforts even during tight budget years and helped MTI better focus its efforts and its grant making procedures to increase effectiveness.