Center for Economic Development

The Center for Economic Development at the University of New Orleans (UNO) is an interdisciplinary public service and outreach unit of the College of Business Administration providing a broad range of technical assistance and applied research services. The primary focus of the Center’s services are businesses, community organizations, local and regional governments, and nonprofit agencies whose interest and efforts are devoted to economic development. Supported by the EDA grant, matching university funds, state government funds, foundation/non-profit organization funds, and program fees, the Center serves as an access point to and conduit for delivery of university-based resources to address the needs of distressed and underserved communities in its service area.

Activities
The Center strives to reach its goals through facilitation of economic development strategic planning initiatives such as the planning and feasibility analysis of a business incubator of an economic development foundation and a processing facility for a local region. The Center also assists in formulating economic redevelopment strategies for local governments, particularly in regard to the disasters the area has experienced over the past decade. The Center strives to stay connected through out the region in economic development by routinely participating in or facilitating meetings focused on some aspect of recovery and rebuilding at the regional or local level. These meetings encompass representatives of the business, civic and governmental communities.

One of the Center’s larger on-going applied research projects is the publication of an annual report on

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<th>Information dissemination</th>
<th>Technical assistance</th>
<th>Applied research</th>
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FY 2012
economic and real estate trends and
the hosting of an annual conference
focusing on the outlook for the
regional economy and real estate
market. The 100+ page report
includes extensive analysis of on
occupancy, absorption, and
price/rent trends as well as a review
of demographic, economic and
construction patterns in the
region. The reports are used
extensively by public and private
entities engaged in a wide range of
projects related to the region’s
continuing rebuilding process.

“The UNO Real Estate Market Data Center has been
a valuable resource in the Louisiana market ever
since I went into business 30 years ago. The
university’s ability to gather data, analyze it, and
provide a historical prospective has been a key
access into my organization’s decision making.”

--Center client

Leveraging
The Center for Economic
Development leverages university
assets such as data, expertise, and
student labor. The Center uses
students extensively for business
planning for non-profits, which is part
of a course. In addition, students are
used as interns to support the applied
research of the Center. Faculty
expertise is leveraged by the Center
through faculty participation in
Center projects.

Success Stories

Training students and helping nonprofits
In the class, the Financial
Administration of Nonprofit
Organizations, teams of students are
paired with local nonprofits to help
write business plans. Over the past
three years, this initiative has
resulted in the preparation of nine
nonprofit business plans and the
preparation of supporting
documents needed to incorporate,
organize and secure tax exempt
status. Most clients are small to
medium sized nonprofit
organizations focused on
neighborhood revitalization, small
business and entrepreneurship and
local economic development.

By sending students to work with
local non-profits as part of their
preparation for non-profit
concentrations in university
degree programs, UNO’s Center
for Economic Development
illustrates how a program can
serve both students and external
clients, achieved by closely
directing student contributions.

Becoming a reliable source of timely
information
Since its inception the UNO Center
has published a comprehensive
analysis of the regional real estate
market covering the full range of
residential, commercial and
industrial properties. These
published reports are widely
circulated and attract significant
media coverage locally as well as
from regional and national outlets.

In addition to those having direct
interests in real estate, the
publications are used by local and
regional EDO’s and site selectors.
The Center also leverages the
investment in maintaining its
extensive database by attracting
contracted applied research
projects.

The Center leverages its expertise
in real estate to attract outside
support for the Center beyond the
government and university
investments.