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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

*Pierce County Executive's Office, Economic Development Division*

Pierce County invests in programs and initiatives to enhance our economy. The Economic Development Division (EDD) is principally charged with delivering programs and services that support our business community and enhance the operating environment for businesses; this leads to job retention and job creation.

The Division's Strategic Plan will guide our activities into the future. It is intended to provide guidance for ongoing programs and services and will change over time so we can meet emergent opportunities and changing conditions.

The EDD is mindful of our responsibilities and is committed to our goals and objectives. We welcome your comments, and appreciate the opportunity to help our economy grow and diversify. This is our team's approach to achieving excellence in economic development.

**Pierce County Economic Development Division**  
**June, 2010**

# MISSION STATEMENT & VISION

## **Mission Statement**

The Economic Development Division supports a business environment that creates local jobs and is the foundation for community wealth and prosperity in Pierce County.

## **Vision**

To be the best economic development organization possible, making a significant contribution to a better community.

# SUMMARY

## Strategic Objectives and Action Steps

<b>1</b>	<b>Foster a Supportive Business Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strive to provide businesses with a variety of location opportunities</li><li>• Participate in federal, state, and especially local policy development affecting business</li><li>• Develop and promote an emergency economic recovery plan</li><li>• Create and maintain a supportive environment, especially for targeted industry sectors</li><li>• Support infrastructure asset development in key economic development corridors</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Provide Direct Support to Businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retain Pierce County businesses through an effective and efficient Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program</li><li>• Support new and existing firms and industries with direct services beyond the BRE program</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Engage in Marketing &amp; Communication Activities that Provide Information and Solicit Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance the EDD's communication strategies</li><li>• Continue to improve the EDD's website to deliver information to businesses.</li><li>• Provide pertinent data and statistical analysis</li><li>• Develop reporting criteria, timelines, and mechanisms</li></ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Be a Community Partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish supportive working relationships with government agencies, regional organizations, and economic development partners</li><li>• Provide strategic funding support to economic development partners</li></ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Be an Advocate for Businesses within Pierce County Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build and enhance relationships with Pierce County Government Departments</li><li>• Support special projects that will enhance and increase the visibility of Pierce County and induce new and existing business owners to do business here</li><li>• Provide constructive feedback to Pierce County Partners</li></ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Deliver Superior Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advance staff skills through training</li><li>• Provide flexible programs and services to meet the needs of business and participate in emergent activities to further our economic development mission</li><li>• Evaluate our performance relative to customer expectations and industry best practices</li><li>• Operate effectively and efficiently</li></ul>

# OBJECTIVE 1

## Foster a Supportive Business Environment

### Introduction:

Pierce County recognizes the importance of business in creating community wealth and prosperity. Unless they are required to be near a market (retailers, doctors) or near a product (fisheries, mountain guide services), businesses are not bound to a specific location and can choose to locate in another community, another state, or even another nation. Government should play a role in shaping a supportive economic environment, with opportunities for a diverse array of businesses where residents can find suitable work opportunities locally.

### Goal:

To help Pierce County become a better place for commerce, where businesses thrive and want to locate, the economy is diversified, and people have the opportunity to work close to home.

- Action 1:** **Strive to provide businesses with a variety of location opportunities.**
- Monitor industrial/commercial land availability and absorption and develop strategies for ensuring an adequate land base for future job needs

- Action 2:** **Participate in federal, state, and especially local policy development affecting business.**
- Monitor state and local legislation and regulation development with a focus on maintaining the best possible business climate for Pierce County industries; actively engage in promoting policies to improve the business climate
  - Engage the business community as an active participant in business environment reform efforts
  - Actively participate in policy development in other jurisdictions and agencies which improves the competitiveness of Pierce County businesses

- Action 3:** **Develop and promote an emergency economic recovery plan.**
- Partner with Emergency Management to proactively plan for our area's economic recovery in the event of a major business disruption

- Action 4:** **Create and maintain a supportive environment, especially for targeted industry sectors.**
- Continue participating in programs intended to recognize, support and expand the military and military related business presence in the community
  - Engage business sectors we target for their job creation potential and positive community impacts and pursue strategies intended to solidify and expand their role in the local economy

- Action 5:** **Support infrastructure asset development in key economic development corridors.**
- Identify and promote key infrastructure projects that will positively affect the Pierce County business community
  - Continue participation in organizations which promote enhanced transportation system alternatives for Pierce County

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Provide Direct Support to Businesses

#### Introduction:

Even though the business climate is dependent on many factors outside of our control such as the national economy and changing business trends, there is a lot we can do on the local level to engage with businesses and create a positive experience that shows Pierce County cares about their investment.

We should continue reaching out to existing businesses to understand their needs, directly engage in problem solving, and increase their awareness of resources to help resolve issues and take advantage of opportunities to thrive and expand. We should also work collaboratively with our partners and support efforts to provide a good first impression for new companies thinking of locating here.

If we are successful, job opportunities will grow, tax revenues will rise and businesses will prosper. In other words wealth will be created at many levels—personal, business, and community.

#### Goal:

To help Pierce County be known as a government entity that welcomes and supports business and that values new and existing business investment and proactively provides direct assistance and information to help them thrive and expand.

#### **Action 1: Retain Pierce County businesses through an effective and efficient Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program.**

- Reach out to existing businesses to understand their needs and increase their awareness of resources to help resolve issues and take advantage of opportunities to thrive and expand
- Act on company feedback by capturing highlights of visits, considering how to best address concerns when trends are recognized
- Enhance program effectiveness by asking clients for referrals/leads on other businesses that could benefit from our programs, including companies interested in expanding into Pierce County
- Contact the headquarters of every BRE client that operates a branch facility in Pierce County
- Continue to re-evaluate BRE survey methodology to ensure we are getting the information needed to make positive changes in Pierce County, influence our legislative agenda, and affect other areas of interest to our business community

#### **Action 2: Support new and existing firms and industries with direct services beyond the BRE program.**

- Support the Economic Development Board (EDB) recruiting strategy; referring inquiring companies to the EDB for proactive recruitment
- Develop an attraction strategy for non-EDB targets (e.g. medical, military-related) and follow up directly when we receive leads on these businesses
- Provide an outstanding customer service approach to helping businesses, connecting them with information and programs tailored to help them resolve issues and take advantage of opportunities to thrive and expand
- Provide case-specific information, technical consulting and project advocacy for businesses involved in land-use permitting and development in Pierce County
- Help businesses and commercial/industrial property owners pursue changes in County land-use code when either business needs change or they have been affected by unintended regulatory consequences

## *OBJECTIVE 2 - Continued*

### **Provide Direct Support to Businesses**

**Action 2: Support new and existing firms and industries with direct services beyond the BRE program. (Continued)**

- Reach out to businesses to identify their top areas of interest and develop, organize and execute teaching seminars to address these issues
- Participate in programs to encourage entrepreneurship and small business development
- Encourage development of disaster-preparedness plans by businesses
- Continue to offer a variety of small business financing programs, loan management, business counseling and technical assistance to small businesses in Pierce County
- Provide data and research to inquiring businesses
- Work with Labor and Industries to ensure Pierce County businesses participate in activities affecting their operations (e.g., the prevailing wage surveys)

## OBJECTIVE 3

# Engage in Marketing & Communication Activities that Provide Information and Solicit Feedback

### Introduction:

This objective strives to make the EDD a more effective communicator to help ensure that business opportunities and services are utilized and all stakeholders, public and private, are informed as to how we make Pierce County a great place to do business.

### Goal:

To communicate in a way that benefits public and private stakeholders and provide information in the most useable formats; raise awareness of economic opportunities within the stakeholder community.

#### **Action 1: Enhance the EDD's communication strategies.**

- Utilize survey tools to ascertain how to best serve our clients and increase our effectiveness
- Employ communication methods that acknowledge successful Pierce County employers and their contribution to our economy
- Produce a quarterly newsletter that is interesting and informative to stakeholders
- Conduct outreach to key economic partners
- Update businesses with information essential to operations (e.g., changes in regulations, changes in taxes, tax incentives, processes, etc.)

#### **Action 2: Continue to improve the EDD's website to deliver information to businesses.**

- Keep the site current and relevant to business
- Integrate new technology when it will sharpen our message and expand our reach
- Utilize the website to enhance programs and projects and to provide greater accessibility for employers

#### **Action 3: Provide pertinent data and statistical analysis.**

- Publish and distribute demographic and economic data useful to businesses and other stakeholders

#### **Action 4: Develop reporting criteria, timelines, and mechanisms.**

- Develop reporting mechanisms that provide timely updates on specific issues and on implementation of the EDD's strategic plan; include achievements of strategic partners receiving County financial support in these reports

## OBJECTIVE 4

### Be a Community Partner

#### Introduction:

Economic development is a team effort. It takes a number of partners, working collaboratively, to understand everything that is happening in the community and to achieve our goals and vision. As a community, we can learn from the collective wisdom of all participants in economic development. We can capitalize on those partnerships to strengthen businesses, increase employment opportunities, leverage resources and coordinate efforts.

Pierce County is fortunate to have a number of jurisdictions and organizations engaged in economic development. By understanding our partners' needs and working collaboratively with them, we can build goodwill and bolster the County's image as a force for positive change within the community and can speak with one voice.

The role of the Economic Development Division is to ensure that Pierce County contributes to, and residents and businesses benefit from, these collective efforts.

#### Goal:

To work with our partners to provide economic development programs and services to businesses and communities as effectively and efficiently as possible.

#### **Action 1: Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with government agencies, regional organizations and economic development partners.**

- Participate in activities that will positively affect our economy
- Evaluate our participation on boards and commissions and find the balance between existing participation and emergent opportunities
- Support the activities of our economic development partners
- Support the economic development efforts of communities within the County
- Look for ways to combine the efforts of economic development partners and other organizations in new ways to achieve strategic goals and address emerging opportunities
- Participate in planning activities that affect our economic goals and objectives
- Collaborate with potential sources of funding for key economic development projects

#### **Action 2: Provide strategic funding support to economic development partners.**

- Work with key partners to develop deliverables that help the County achieve its economic goals and objectives

## OBJECTIVE 5

# Be an Advocate for Businesses within Pierce County Government

### Introduction:

Pierce County government affects economic development. Some departments have a direct effect on business such as Planning and Land Services (PALS), Public Works and Utilities (PWU), and the County Council. Others may have an indirect effect. For example, some departments such as Parks, Sheriff, and Community Services affect the quality of the community. The services provided by the various departments of Pierce County government make this a great place to operate a business. It is incumbent upon the EDD to engage our County partners to improve economic development opportunities.

### Goal:

To help Pierce County departments recognize the importance of economic development and understand their roles in economic development. The EDD will respect the importance of other departments and the roles these departments have in assisting EDD achieve its mission.

#### **Action 1:**      **Build and enhance relationships.**

- Participate in appropriate interdepartmental activities and community events providing awareness of current programs and services available to businesses

#### **Action 2:**      **Support special projects that will enhance and increase the visibility of Pierce County to induce new and existing business owners to do business here.**

- Actively support the U.S. Amateur and the U.S. Open; assist with planning and execution of initiatives to prepare the County and the community (including business community) for the upcoming golf tournaments
- Participate and assist with planning future events that will help generate revenues for business, attract business investment in Pierce County, or enhance and increase the visibility of Pierce County businesses and communities

#### **Action 3:**      **Provide constructive feedback to Pierce County Partners.**

#### **Action 4:**      **Develop a forum to positively recognize businesses and business owners for significant positive contributions to the County's economy and/or the community.**

## OBJECTIVE 6

### Deliver Superior Customer Service

#### Introduction:

The Pierce County EDD continually seeks program, product, and performance excellence.

#### Goal:

To achieve staff excellence by being informed, knowledgeable and confident of our abilities.

#### **Action 1:** Advance staff skills through training.

- Cross-train inter-departmentally as appropriate to enhance inter-departmental relationships and improve knowledge of county processes
- Cross-train intra-departmentally
- Attend appropriate training and informational sessions to increase staff knowledge and/or to improve job performance

#### **Action 2:** Provide flexible programs and services to meet the needs of business and participate in emergent activities to further our economic development mission.

- Recognize changes in our operating environment and adjust plans, programs and services as needed

#### **Action 3:** Evaluate our performance relative to customer expectations and industry best practices.

- Create a customer-service satisfaction survey and analyze the results, seeking ways to improve
- Create reports to inform readers of EDD activities
- Benefit from professional networks, incorporating best practices into our work program

#### **Action 4:** Operate effectively and efficiently.

- Achieve administrative goals (e.g., being effective stewards of the public's investment in economic development, preparing on-time reporting and evaluations, and receiving findings-free audits)