



## Certification Application

### Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community (EDCC) Program

The Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community (EDCC) program is sponsored by the Nebraska Diplomats and administered by staff at the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

The designation of EDCC is reserved for those communities that document economic development readiness. Each applicant community is evaluated on program standards related to their community's organization, community identified targets and/or markets, community infrastructure, local financing and business assistance, and existing sites and/or building information.

Certification in the EDCC program requires a serious commitment from the applicant community. Applicant communities are expected to have a full-time economic development director focused on business retention and expansion efforts and recruitment efforts.

Certification will be good for five (5) years, with annual reviews of the community's economic development website and LOIS information. Websites and LOIS portals not current and consistent with information will result in suspension of certification.

#### Program Purpose:

In the extremely competitive field of economic development, those community's with the highest degree of readiness are most likely to succeed. The purpose of the EDCC program is to accommodate new business prospect inquiries and support expansions. The EDCC application process provides communities the opportunity to learn about relevant needs for various projects and how to strategically plan to address those needs.

Although this program is not realistic for all communities, the process to help identify capacity, stimulate focused planning and deliberately structure websites are invaluable for all communities regardless of size. For those communities that do not meet the requirements for the EDCC program, we recommend exploring the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Leadership Designation Program. For further information about the Leadership Designation Program, contact Kelly Geweke at 308-627-3151 or by e-mail at [kelly.geweke@nebraka.gov](mailto:kelly.geweke@nebraka.gov) or visit our website at <http://www.neded.org/community/community-info/community-improvement/leadership-community>.

#### Recertification:

Every five (5) years a community with EDCC designation must submit a recertification application that addresses the standards of Organization, Infrastructure, Identified Targets or Markets, Business Retention and Expansion Program, Strategic Planning, Marketing Efforts, Long-Range Funding Plan, Labor Market Information and Efforts, Nebraska Diplomat's, and an Economic Development Evaluation.

Six months prior to an EDCC expiration date, a community will receive written notification from the Department of Economic Development indicating the date that a recertification application is due.

Directions:

The EDCC Certification Application must be submitted as a PDF via e-mail to Lynn Kohout at [lynn.kohout@nebraska.gov](mailto:lynn.kohout@nebraska.gov) and Lori Cole at [lori.a.cole@nebraska.gov](mailto:lori.a.cole@nebraska.gov). The PDF must be less than 5 MB in size.

EDCC Certification applications are treated as official “Request for Proposals” from the Department meaning that a community must thoroughly answer all questions, number all pages, and identify within the document (easily viewable) the date it is being submitted to the Department.

An EDCC Certification application must include a thumbnailed (i.e. clickable) “Table of Contents”. All attachments should be part of the PDF and identified in the “Table of Contents.”

The applications are reviewed and evaluated by a committee of economic development professionals outside the Department. A community will receive a letter from the Department approximately four weeks from the application submission date, notifying them of their certification and/or indicating any necessary items that need to be addressed to obtain certification.

Any questions can be directed to Lynn Kohout at 402-440-2599 or [lynn.kohout@nebraska.gov](mailto:lynn.kohout@nebraska.gov).

# EDCC Certification Application Requirements

## Section One: Organization

### Part I. – Local Government Support

Provide a letter from the applicant's municipal government identifying the lead economic development agency and local contact person for the EDCC Recertification application.

Provide a Resolution of Support from the applicant community (sample resolution provided).

### Part II. – Letters of Support

Provide letters of support from relevant economic development partners (i.e. county agency, development district, Rural Enterprise Assistance Program, etc.)

### Part III. – Organizational Structure

Identify the organizational structure of the community's lead economic development agency.

- City Government
- County Government
- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development Organization
- Other (Please Identify):

If the lead economic development agency is a Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Organization or Other, identify the organizations tax status.

- 501©3
- 501©4
- 501©6
- Other (Please Identify):

### Part IV. – Mission

Identify the mission statement of the lead economic development agency.

### Part V. – Bylaws

Provide a copy of the lead economic development agency's bylaws. (The lead economic development agency's bylaws should address organizational leadership, including how board members are selected, their term of office and total length of service allowed.)

### Part VI. – Organizational Staffing and Collaborate Relationships

Describe the organizational staffing and collaborative relationships with regional professional staff including but not limited to economic development partners, utility providers, community colleges and universities, Rural Enterprise Assistance Program, the Nebraska Diplomats, etc.

### Part VII. – Economic Development Collaborative Relationships

Describe the economic development collaborative relationships with local organizations including but not limited to local chamber of commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB), housing organizations and developers, LB840 committee, etc.

**Part VIII. - Nebraska Diplomats**

Identify the first and last name of each Nebraska Diplomat located in the applicant community, along with the business they own or work for. In addition, identify how each Nebraska Diplomat participates in the local community’s economic development efforts.

EDCC communities must engage their local business leaders and owners in the Nebraska Diplomat’s program. Refer to the table below for a guideline on the minimum number of Nebraska Diplomat’s representing the local community to meet the EDCC program requirements.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>Guideline for Number of Nebraska Diplomat’s per Community:</u>
Less than 5,000	1
5,000 – 10,000	3
Greater than 10,000	5

**Part IX. – Nebraska Economic Developers Association (NEDA)**

Identify who is the community is a member of the Nebraska Economic Developers Association (NEDA), how long they have been a member for and identify the NEDA sponsored events they have participated in.

**Part X. – Strategic Plan**

Within the last five-years the applicant community or lead economic development agency must have participated in a long-range strategic planning process involving their economic development efforts. This strategic planning process should include:

- Assessment of the community’s assets and liabilities.
- Identification of key local issues.
- An outline of goals and objectives (objectives should describe key results to be achieved, measures of progress, and target dates for achievement).
- Development of strategic actions that will accomplish the community’s economic development goals and objectives.
- An implementation plan that includes organizational responsibilities, resource allocation (how will the community fund the strategy), and a one-year work program (annual action plan).
- Evaluation methods that enable the community or organization to determine if it is achieving expected results. The plan should be flexible enough to allow for emerging opportunities.

Attach or provide a link to the community’s most recent strategic plan for economic development.

**Part XI. – Economic Development Work Plan**

The community should have a current (within the past 12 months) economic development work plan. The work plan should include timelines for completion and responsible parties. Provide a link or attachment to the community’s existing economic development work plan.

**Part XII. - Long-Range Funding Plan**

The community should have a long-range funding plan (minimally for the next fiscal year) for the community’s economic development efforts or economic development agency. The funding plan should include the costs for staff, benefits, travel, contracted service providers, and volunteers involved in the economic development efforts. Also other organizational needs should be identified, including adequate

staffing, equipment, and resources to operate an efficient and productive economic development business. Additionally, this should include necessary capital reserves to respond to immediate business opportunities, and funding sources for any ongoing operation of the economic development group.

Attach or provide a link to the community's Long-Range Funding Plan for economic development. The plan should be in the form of a balanced budget.

### **Part XIII. - Website**

The community or lead economic development agency must have a working and updated website focused on the community's economic development efforts.

The review committee will ensure the applicable website includes:

- A. Identification
  1. Name of community or organization.
  2. Name of STATE – Nebraska clearly shown.
  3. Map showing location of community within Nebraska.
  4. Location identification found on every page.
  5. Action photos showcasing the community.
  
- B. Contact Information
  1. Full/complete information (physical address, telephone with area code, email address).
  2. Contact information found clearly on home page and in the footer/header/sidebar of every page of the site.
  3. Emails should be “hot” or working, and spelled out – not somebody’s name underlined, or a sentence saying “email us.”
  4. If the page features a “Contact Us” button or tab – it should open up another page on the website with the same look and feel and should contain contact information. This should NEVER be a link that automatically opens as an email.
  
- C. Navigation
  1. Should be easy to follow and identify where one is at all times within the site.
  2. Provides way back home without having to use “back” button.
  
- D. Economic Development Page
  1. If providing a link to the community's or economic development organization's website, a page or tab must be dedicated to the economic development efforts.
  
- E. Online Properties
  1. Website must have Location One Information System integrated or linked so all available sites and buildings are accessible to the viewer.

Provide a working link to the community's or lead economic development agency's website.

### **Part XIV. - Business Retention & Expansion Program**

Provide detailed information on the community's Business Retention & Expansion program. Include:

- How businesses are identified/targeted for visits?
- What industries are included in the visits?

- How visits are conducted and who is involved?
- How the community uses the information collected from each visit?
- How visit follow-up is initiated and tracked?
- An explanation of any recognition program for local industries/business.

In addition, provide a listing of visits that have been conducted during the past 12 months.

EDCC communities are required to complete a minimum number of business visits annually based on population size. Refer to the table below for a guideline on the number of visits a community is required to conduct annually to meet the EDCC program requirements.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>Guideline for BR&amp;E Visits Conducted Annually:</u>
Less than 5,000	15 Interviews
5,000 – 10,000	25 Interviews
Greater than 10,000	35 Interviews

**Part XV. – Economic Development Training and Continuing Education**

Provide a list of economic development trainings and continuing education opportunities the economic development staff, committee members and community members have participated in within the past three years (please include the date of each training). Trainings can include but are not limited to DED briefing, marketing training, Nebraska Economic Developers Association conferences, OU EDI, REAP, etc.

Provide the date and a list of individuals who have participated in a Mock Prospect Visit training and a Mock Prospect Visit for the community. If the community has not participated in a Mock Prospect Visit training and a Mock Prospect Visit in the last three (3) years, provide a list of the formal Request for Proposals the community has received and responded to from the Department and utility partners. Also provide a list (along with the date) of the actual site visits the community has hosted for recruitment projects in the last three (3) years.

**Part XVI. - Location One Information System (LOIS) Information**

The community must have LOIS fully integrated or linked into the community’s or lead economic development agency’s website. In LOIS the applicant must have all Community Information, Available Buildings, and Available Sites fully populated with current information (i.e. all printable flyer fields and advanced search fields must be completed, and at least one photo for the community information, each available building, and each available site).

From the provided link the review committee will verify that all Community Information, Available Buildings, and Available Sites in LOIS are fully populated with current information.

**Part XVII. - Marketing Materials**

Attach a copy or link to the community’s marketing materials used for economic development and business recruitment efforts. Marketing materials may include printed materials, websites, etc.

## Section Two: Identified Targets and/or Markets

### Part I. – Target and/or Market Focus

Identify the community's existing industry sector(s) and geographic focuses, as well as the community's targeted markets for recruitment activities. Describe how the targeted industries or market segments for the community were determined and provide an overview of the marketing plan to address identified targets.

### Part II. - Labor Market Information and Efforts

The community must maintain current labor market information from a survey or compiled report. Labor market information should support the community's targeted marketing efforts and be no older than three years.

The Nebraska Department of Labor, a utility provider, or a contracted agency, are useful resources in compiling labor market information for a community.

Attach a copy of the community's most recent labor market information.

In addition, summarize the results of the community's recent labor market information. Identify what the labor market report tells us about the applicant community's workforce.

### Part III. – Labor Market Initiatives

Describe the community's efforts and initiatives to address labor market and available workforce issues. Include information regarding partnerships formed with businesses, community colleges and schools within the community and region to develop strategies for providing skilled labor and resources to train people.

Provide a list of local workforce development testing and training resources for your community include the name of the entity and a short explanation of the workforce resource they provide.

Provide a list of the local continuing education and higher education opportunities available to the community, including distance learning opportunities.

## Section Three: Community Infrastructure

### Part I. – Infrastructure

Identify any known infrastructure requirements for the community's targeted development (i.e. ethanol targets require rail and gas; distribution targets require wide turn access and 50 acre sites; some targets may require large water or wastewater treatment capabilities). Identify any known obstacles in regard to infrastructure and the community's plan to remedy the deficiencies.

### Part II. – Communications

Provide a summary describing the local telecommunications options available within the community. Identify any challenges or deficiencies the community has with their local telecommunications options and what remedial options are being explored to address the challenges and deficiencies.

Provide a summary identifying cell phone coverage in the area and local broadband capabilities.

Provide a summary identifying any other relevant telecommunications or technology issues in the community.

### **Part III. – Housing**

Identify if the community has an existing housing study in place and what steps are being taken to implement their action plan. Provide an attachment or link to the community's most recent housing study.

### **Part IV. – Childcare and Adult Daycare**

Provide a summary of the childcare and adult daycare options available in the community. Identify the community's plan to address deficiencies in childcare and adult daycare services.

## **Section Four: Local Financing and Business Assistance**

### **Part I. – Local Financing and Incentives**

Provide a summary of local and regional financing and incentive options available to a business. (Do not include state incentive information.) The summary should include a description of local and regional revolving loan funds, LB840 guidelines, CDBG reuse funds, NDO reuse funds, private investment club, etc.

### **Part II – Business and Entrepreneurial Assistance**

Provide a summary of local and regional business assistance programs, including but not limited to technical support, management support and entrepreneurial support.

## **Section Five: Controlled Site or Building Information**

A community needs to have an available site (approximately 20 acres or more), or available building (approximately 20,000 square feet or more) developed, or in the process of being developed to achieve EDCC certification. The site or building must be controlled in the form of ownership, an option, or a right-of-first refusal. The building or site must be listed in LOIS and fully populated (i.e. all printable flyer fields and advanced search fields completed, and at least one photo of the site or building provided).

### **Part I. - Existing Building (if used for the purpose of this application)**

- A. Submit (as an attachment) documentation of price-control for the building (could be a letter of agreement with the owner, or documentation of ownership).
- B. Submit LOIS link to **fully populated** building page.
- C. Identify the community's targeted industry goals for the building.
- D. Identify if the property has any liens against it. If the property has liens against it identify the lien holders.
- E. Identify the infrastructure currently serving the building including water, wastewater, electricity, and natural gas service. Also identify roads serving the building and telecommunication services available.
- F. Describe the status of infrastructure extensions and/or upgrades needed to serve a potential customer at the building as it relates to the community's targeted industry goals. Identify the estimated timeline to complete the necessary infrastructure extension and upgrades.
- G. Identify if utility redundancy is available for electrical, water and telecommunication services.
- H. Identify how the building is currently zoned. If the building is not currently zoned appropriately for a potential user (as identified by the community's target markets), identify the process and timing for rezoning the property.

- I. Identify if the building has rail service. If the building is not rail served, could the building potentially have rail service and identify if the community has explored the option for rail service.

**Part II. - Site Development (if used for the purpose of this application)**

- A. Submit (as an attachment) documentation of price-control for the site (could be a letter of agreement with the owner, documentation of ownership, an option, or right-of first refusal).
- B. Submit LOIS link to **fully populated** site page.
- C. Identify the community's targeted industry goals for the site.
- D. Identify if a Phase I environmental assessment or DEQ Section 128(a) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment has been completed. Provide the date in which the assessment was completed along with a description of the findings. Submit (as an attachment or link to) a copy of the Phase I environmental assessment or DEQ Section 128(a) Phase I Environmental Site Assessment.
- E. Identify if the property has any liens against it. If the property has liens against it identify the lien holders.
- F. Identify the infrastructure currently serving the site including water, wastewater, electricity, and natural gas service. Also identify roads serving the site and telecommunication services available at the site. If basic infrastructure is not available at the site, explain the process, timeline, and budget to bring each utility service to the site.
- G. Describe the status of infrastructure extensions and/or upgrades needed to serve a potential customer at the site as it relates to the community's targeted industry goals. Identify the estimated timeline to complete the necessary infrastructure extension and upgrades.
- H. Identify if utility redundancy is available at the site for electrical, water and telecommunication services.
- I. Submit the applicable timeline for a potential company to obtain a building permit. If applicable, identify if a "quick permit" process is available and if so the timeline for the process.
- J. Identify if the site is located in a floodplain, contains wetlands, or is home to endangered species.
- K. Identify how the site is currently zoned. If the site is not currently zoned appropriately for a potential user (as identified by the community's target markets), identify the process and timing for zoning the property.
- L. Identify non-cash local incentives for site development (i.e. site grading, infrastructure extensions, road enhancements, etc.)
- M. Provide a summary addressing ingress and egress road considerations including but not limited to weight limits, traffic flow concerns and four (4) seasons roads. In addition identify the Department of Roads District Engineer for the site.
- N. Identify if the site has rail service. If the site is not rail served, could the site potentially have rail service and identify if the community has explored the option for rail service.

**Sample Resolution of Support**

*WHEREAS*, local municipal government, county government, and regional economic development entities must provide leadership and coordination for economic development efforts; and

*WHEREAS*, economic development needs can best be solved through a cooperative effort between local, county, regional and state economic development organizations and entities; and

*WHEREAS*, there is a need to recognize and promote our community’s organizational readiness, infrastructure investment, ability to respond to business needs, and

*WHEREAS*, the Economic Development Certified Community Program, administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, has been reviewed and found to be a program promoting our community’s economic development preparedness;

*THEREFORE*, the village board or city council of \_\_\_\_\_, the county board of supervisors or county commissioners of \_\_\_\_\_ county, or the board of the \_\_\_\_\_ (regional economic development entity) do herewith pledge their full support, endorsement, and cooperation for participation in Nebraska’s Economic Development Certified Community Program by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(name of applicant village or city)

Approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Entity Represented \_\_\_\_\_