



Economic Development Career Path Breakout Sessions

Architecture, Engineering, & Construction

A career in A/E/C is all about creating and building the spaces where people live, work, and play. They support economic development by planning, designing, and constructing the buildings, roads, and infrastructure that attract businesses, support jobs, and improve communities. Their job is to help communities build (or show the potential for) new product (i.e. buildings) in their areas and making timely connections to get deals completed.

Business Development & Sales

Business development in economic development focuses on "selling" a community and creating economic opportunities for local residents. Professionals in this role build relationships with companies considering relocation or expansion, as well as with site selectors. Within partner and ally organizations, business development centers on securing new projects, supporting existing clients, and expanding market presence. These professionals help drive growth, sustainability, and long-term economic success.

Consulting & Government Affairs

In economic development, consultants help companies expanding or relocating by guiding site selection, incentives negotiation, land use, real estate, and utilities. Many operate nationally, specialize by industry or region, and assist domestic and international companies entering the US., providing expertise that supports business growth and community development. Economic development also involves state government affairs work, including policy navigation, regulatory compliance, and coordination with state and local agencies to advance public-sector strategies and support sustainable economic growth.

Local Economic Development & Workforce Development

Local economic development strengthens communities by creating jobs, attracting and retaining businesses, and improving quality of life through site development, infrastructure investment, and business-friendly policies. Success depends on collaboration among local governments, industry partners, and community organizations. When paired with strong workforce development – supported by the Department of Commerce, community colleges, and universities – communities align talent pipelines with business needs, creating a competitive, resilient economy and long-term prosperity.

Research, Marketing, & Communications

A career in Research, Marketing, and Communications requires problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, and strong writing and data analysis skills. It involves supporting business recruitment with workforce, education, and economic data; conducting competitive analyses; creating content across publications, presentations, and digital platforms; analyzing data to guide community growth strategies; organizing events, briefings, and VIP visits; managing strategic communications and media relations; and pursuing funding through grant writing to advance organizational and community goals.

State Government

A career in state government in North Carolina often involves working for the NC Department of Commerce or its public-private partner, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. Professionals in this field help shape economic development strategy using tools such as tax incentives, workforce training programs, infrastructure investments, and targeted business recruitment efforts. Their work supports the growth of existing businesses, attracts new companies, strengthens local economies, and drives sustainable economic growth across communities throughout the state.

Utility Partners

A career in utility economic development is increasingly vital as demand for energy grows. Professionals in natural gas and electric utilities support projects that enhance infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, and promote sustainability. These roles involve collaboration with government, businesses, and communities, offering diverse opportunities for growth. With a focus on innovation and technology, the field provides a dynamic environment where individuals contribute to cutting-edge solutions that drive economic growth and environmental stewardship.