



WHY NCEDA?

For students exploring careers in economic development, success starts with learning, building connections, and gaining real-world perspective. In today's fast-changing economy, access to current knowledge, practical insights, and professional networks can make all the difference. By becoming a student member of the [North Carolina Economic Development Association](#) (NCEDA), you gain early exposure to the field and connect with North Carolina's leading community of economic development professionals – helping you build skills, confidence, and relationships that support your future career.

ASSOCIATION OVERVIEW

With more than 950 members, NCEDA represents the collective voice of North Carolina's economic development community. For 60 years, the Association has brought together professionals and partners from across the state to support business growth, job creation, and investment – shaping the places where people live, work, and build careers.

As the state's leading association for economic development, NCEDA offers students a front-row seat to the field. Through its programs and partnerships, the Association provides opportunities to learn from experienced professionals, build meaningful connections, and explore real-world economic development challenges and solutions.

NCEDA supports the next generation of economic development leaders by:

- Offering conferences, events, and professional development programs that expose students to current trends, tools, and career paths.
- Providing insight into economic development policy and advocacy, helping students understand how decisions at the state and local levels shape communities.
- Creating opportunities to connect and collaborate with professionals working at the local, regional, and state levels.
- Promoting a strong understanding of the role economic development plays in community success across North Carolina.
- Encouraging mentorship and networking that help students build skills, confidence, and professional relationships early in their careers.

NCEDA's membership includes economic development professionals from across North Carolina, along with public and private partners such as contractors, engineers, architects, educators, commercial real estate professionals, utility representatives, and financial leaders. Together, they share a common goal: creating sustainable economic opportunity in every North Carolina community, and supporting the students who will lead that work in the future.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Stay Informed

NCEDA helps student members stay up to speed on what's happening in economic development across North Carolina:

- *Developments* e-newsletter – Covers industry trends, legislative updates, career opportunities, and news from across the state.
- NCEDA website (nceda.org) – Your go-to hub for member resources, events, and professional development opportunities.
- NCEDA Membership Directory – A searchable directory that gives you direct access to professionals across the state—because networking matters.

Explore Issues, Share Ideas & Build Connections

NCEDA offers hands-on opportunities to learn about the field and connect with professionals working in economic development:

- Three annual conferences featuring panels and presentations on real-world challenges and opportunities.
- Professional development webinars and seminars focused on timely, career-relevant topics.
- Luncheons and workshops that provide insight into key issues while connecting you with business and government leaders.
- The Emerging Executives Initiative, designed to engage newer professionals through tailored programming and community service opportunities.
- NCEDA Book Club, offering a relaxed way to learn, discuss, and connect with peers and professionals.
- The NCEDA Mentorship Program, pairing students and early-career members with experienced professionals for guidance, advice, and career insight.

Learn More—and Get Funded

NCEDA offers scholarships twice a year to support student members and help reduce the cost of professional development:

- **Basic Economic Development Scholarship**
Covers tuition plus reimburses travel, lodging, meals, and related expenses to attend the one-week Basic Economic Development Course at UNC Chapel Hill. Two scholarships available – estimated value: \$1,600 per scholarship.
- **NCEDA Annual Conference Scholarship**
Covers conference registration plus reimburses travel, lodging, meals, and related expenses to attend the 2026 NCEDA Annual Conference (June 17–19, Wilmington, NC). Two scholarships available – estimated value: \$800 per scholarship.

Join Today!

As a student member, you'll join economic developers from across the state in shaping public policy and advocating for strategies that strengthen North Carolina's economy and global competitiveness.

- \$25 – New student membership
- \$25 – Annual renewal while enrolled in school

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION AND JOIN THE NCEDA FAMILY!](#)

Contact Liz Dobbins-Smith (888.246.2332 / liz@nceda.org) with any questions!