

5 Pillars of Economic Resiliency

A Best Practices Guide Brought to You by



Center for Industrial Services
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE



Introduction

Economic resilience refers to “the ability to withstand, prevent or quickly recover from major disruptions – or shocks – to its underlying economic base” (EDA). Economic developers play a vital role in building economic resiliency in their local and regional economies. Being prepared on the front end can significantly affect a community’s ability to bounce back after such disruptions.

Most communities and businesses have experienced and responded to some level of disruption whether a natural disaster such as an extreme weather event, an economic shock such as a national downturn, or a manmade disaster such as a cyber-attack. The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented social and economic disruption that affected the global population.

This Resiliency Guide was developed by [University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services \(UT CIS\)](#) in response to the widespread impact of COVID-19 with two things in mind. (1) To provide economic developers and community leaders with practical tips and resources to build resiliency into all aspects of their economic development strategies and (2) To serve as a practical guide that includes checklists for EDOs/Chambers to be better prepared to respond during a disaster and throughout the recovery.

From maintaining a robust business retention/expansion plan to digitizing the recruitment tools and transforming the workforce for the future, economic developers must think holistically and creatively, while embracing diversity and regionalism, to successfully assist their communities in becoming more economically resilient.

5 Pillars of Economic Resiliency

Strategic Communications

Robust Business Retention & Expansion Plan

Transformational Workforce Development

Innovative Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development

Enhanced Digital Marketing & Recruiting Tools

Pillar: Strategic Communications

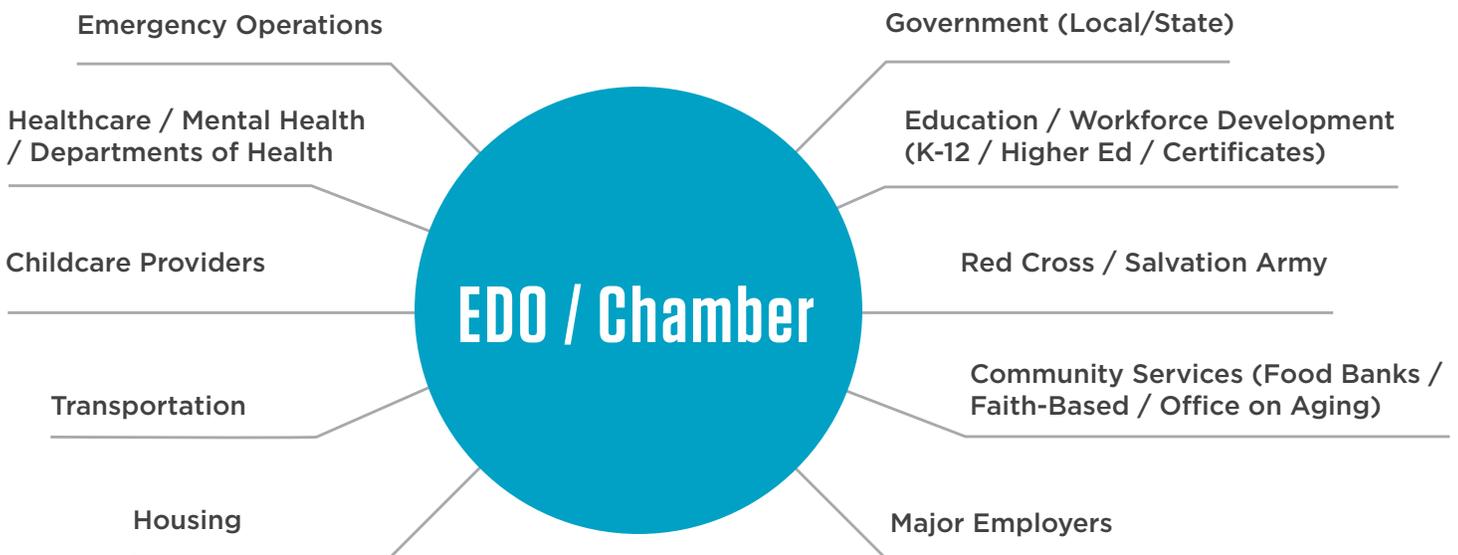
To minimize confusion and dispel rumors, timely, clear and credible communication is one of the most important functions in disaster preparedness and response. The EDO/Chamber plays a vital role in facilitating communication among all stakeholders and should serve as the lead liaison for business and industry.



Expand the traditional economic development resource network

The pandemic revealed the need to expand the traditional EDO/Chamber networks, such as local and state government and the education/workforce community, to include a number of other community resource providers. The network should also include key agencies and organizations such as social services, housing, healthcare/mental health, transportation, Red Cross, departments of health, childcare and major employers.

Expanded Economic Development Resource Network





Engage with local government emergency preparedness organizations

It is important for EDOs/Chambers to understand the emergency management process to better assist existing businesses during a disaster and the recovery.

- **A senior EDO/Chamber staff member** should be a member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and/or Emergency Operation Center (EOC).
- **EDO/Chamber should request placement on the communications tree** for the local Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and/or the Local Emergency Management Agency.



Create a communications plan before a disaster occurs

- **Develop the crisis communications team** and determine the primary spokesperson.
- **Identify internal and external stakeholders** including contact information.
- **Establish notification and monitoring systems** i.e., social media, text, electronic newsletter, etc.
- **Develop key messaging** that aligns with local government officials and maintain active communication to ensure continuity of messaging.
- **Include the organization's notification tree** of who notifies who in the communications plan.



Maintain stakeholder relations

- **Maintain open lines of communications** with all stakeholders including employees, board of directors, existing businesses, elected/appointed officials, regional ED partners, media and community at large.
- **Internal stakeholders** should hear important news from you first.
- **Create an inventory of available resources** to assist the community such as the Knoxville Chamber [Workforce Services Directory](#) or the [Sumner County Not-For-Profit Checklist](#). Make the inventory available on your website.



Build relationships with the media

- **Establish rapport with local media** through lunch meetings, networking and sharing information. Invite a board member to join you.
- **Develop a communications strategy** for working with all local media outlets prior to a community crisis. Designate specific staff members to engage with the media to ensure correct messaging.
- **Maintain constant communication** with local officials and emergency response team to ensure consistency.
- **Respond to media inquiries** in a timely manner to avoid reporters turning to another source that may not provide correct information.



Become the communications hub for existing business and industry

- **Prepare and maintain an up-to-date list of available resources** from public and private resources to share with businesses. Consider hosting a resource page on your website.
- **Maintain current contact information** of the existing industries including cell phone numbers and personal email addresses for CEOs and/or key personnel in the event of a disaster.
- **Make contact as soon as possible** after a disaster. Be prepared to utilize virtual meetings when in-person visits are not possible.
- **Provide clear and accurate information** to enable businesses to make sound decisions as they begin to recover.
- **Assist businesses in communicating** their damages and needs to local officials.
- **Advocate for additional services** that may be needed from local, state or federal resources to assist in business recovery.
- **Assist your businesses in communicating** when they are open for business to external audiences.



Be the positive voice for the community

Negative perceptions by external audiences can jeopardize economic recovery, especially when the community relies heavily on tourism. EDOs/Chambers are in a unique position not only to provide a platform for resources for the community, but also to promote unity and celebrate the community during a disaster and through its recovery. Tell a story of opportunity!

- **Be a convener and create opportunities to bring the community together** to assist in the recovery.
- **Celebrate the community's positive actions and outcomes** during a crisis and share on social media. Businesses and site selectors looking at your community to locate or expand will pay attention to how a community responds to a disruption.
- **Post on social media as soon as possible the "We are open for business!"** message to the outside world. This is especially important when your community relies heavily on tourism.



Section Resources

[Leadership in Times of Crisis Toolkit](#)

From restoreyoureconomy.org

[IC Disaster Recovery](#)

[Communications Plan Template](#)

From SmartSheet

[Social Media Accounts to Follow](#)

From Ready.Gov

[Business Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Toolkits](#)

From Ready.Gov

[Social Media Preparedness Toolkits](#)

From Ready.Gov

[Workforce Services Directory](#)

From Knoxville Chamber

[Sumner County Not-For-Profit](#)

[Checklist and Mapping](#)

From Forward Sumner

Pillar:

Robust Business Retention and Expansion Plan

It is vital that economic developers keep abreast of the industries in their communities in order to assess the risk of impact and/or closure due to a disruption of operations. On average, 80% of new jobs and capital investment are generated by existing businesses.

The recent coronavirus pandemic made it crystal clear that Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) efforts must go beyond the traditional measures to reach and maintain economic resiliency. BRE is the economic developer's primary conduit to the business community.



Develop a business and industry outreach plan

Every community must have an outreach plan for its existing industries pre- and post-disaster. The plan must be flexible depending upon the severity and longevity of a disaster.

- **Establish a disaster outreach and recovery team** including members beyond your organization, such as emergency management, childcare providers, food banks, departments of health, mental health and faith-based organizations.
- **Maintain up-to-date contact information** of the existing industries, including cell phone numbers and personal email addresses for CEOs and/or key personnel in the event of a disaster.
- **Prepare and maintain a list of available resources** to share with businesses and keep it up to date. Reach out to regional and state partners such as [TNECD](#), [TVA](#), [Development Districts](#) and [UT CIS Solutions Consultants](#) to understand all resources available. Economic developers need not become the subject matter expert, but must become experts at making connections.
- **Make contact with existing industries as soon as possible after a disaster.** Be prepared to utilize virtual meeting platforms when in-person visits are not possible.
- **Consider targeted groups of virtual meetings** when a disaster is widespread. Invite resource providers to share information on assistance. During the pandemic, some providers can set up virtual office hours for drop-ins.

Encourage Business Continuity Planning

Many businesses are not prepared for a disruption in operations. Small businesses with a single location are particularly at risk. [According to Ready.Gov](#), 75% of small businesses without a continuity plan fail within 3 years of a major event.

- **Provide workshops and resources on business continuity planning** and emergency preparedness for your industries. Reach out to [TSBDC](#) and [UT CIS](#) for assistance.
- **Explore [Ready.Gov](#) and [DisasterSafety.org](#)** for disaster preparedness and business continuity planning, [toolkits](#) and sample [templates](#).

On average, **80%** of new jobs and capital investment are generated by existing businesses.

Understand the supply chain and the capabilities of your industries to help them grow

COVID-19 was a wake-up call to many businesses for how unprepared they were for a major disruption in their supply chain. The pandemic accelerated the trend to move production back to the US and manufacturing closer to markets which provides many opportunities for existing industries.

- **Develop and maintain an existing industry directory.** Posted on your website, a directory will provide industries with added visibility and improved SEO. Directories should include updated contact information, website address and ideally, capabilities, special equipment and certifications.
- **Think regional!** Become familiar with the businesses in neighboring counties, the region and the state that are potential customers or suppliers to your local businesses.
- **Engage in local and regional** Manufacturing Roundtables and HR Associations.
- **Contact your area [UT CIS Solutions Consultant](#).** As part of the NIST [Manufacturing Extension Partnership \(MEP\) network](#), UT CIS consultants can assist with supply chain issues and identify growth opportunities.
- **Reach out to your area [TNECD Business Development Consultant](#) and [TVA Regional Specialist](#)** to identify available incentives that will assist in the growth of your existing industries.
- **Introduce your manufacturers to [CONNEX™ Tennessee](#)** the state's premier supply chain tool. Provided at no cost through UT CIS, the powerful online capabilities and connectivity platform enables manufacturers to find additional suppliers, discover new market opportunities as a supplier to others, connect to state resources and more.

- **Introduce your manufacturers** to [Made in Tennessee \(MIT\)](#). MIT is an initiative to support and celebrate Tennessee manufacturing. The no cost program includes an online directory providing added visibility to manufacturers.



Provide assistance with access to recovery capital

During a disaster, accessing capital is critical, but most small businesses don't know where to turn for assistance and programs can be difficult to navigate.

- **Position your organization as a navigator** for business disaster recovery resources and capital. Designate a point person to collect information on resources at all levels of government.
- **Develop relationships with local banks, regional and state partners** such as [TSBDC](#), [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) to accelerate communications and facilitate connections when disaster strikes.
- **Establish a business recovery fund** controlled locally for short-term assistance until federal or state funds can be secured.
- **Reach out to public and private institutions** such as [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) regarding the development of a disaster bridge loan program.



Introduce your existing industries to new streams of revenue

Businesses that are agile and economically diversified are inherently more resilient against economic shocks. Assist businesses in finding short-and long-term opportunities for growth and resiliency.

- **Identify and connect businesses to new opportunities** during a disaster. Some manufacturers were able to pivot and retool to produce high demand supplies such as PPE during the pandemic.
- **Host a free training workshop** on how to economically diversify and grow a business through (1) government contracting with the [UT CIS Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#) and (2) exporting products with [TSBDC International Trade Center](#).
- **Introduce your existing industries to commercialization** opportunities. Tennessee is fortunate to have valuable research assets such as [ORNL](#), [Y-12](#) and [UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\)](#) with technology transfer offices to assist businesses across the state with commercialization opportunities.
- **Introduce your existing industries to [CONNEX™ Tennessee](#)**, Provided at no cost through UT CIS, the state's premier online supply chain tool and marketplace, offers businesses the ability to connect and discover new market opportunities by posting and responding to RFQs, RFIs, and RFPs.

Section Resources

[Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development \(TNECD\) Staff Directory](#)

From TNECD

[Tennessee Valley Authority \(TVA\) Economic Development Team](#)

From TVA

[Tennessee Development Districts](#)

From Tennessee Development Districts Association (TDDA)

[UT CIS Solutions Consultants](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[Manufacturing Extension Partnership National Network \(MEPNN\)](#)

From NIST.gov

[UT CIS Emergency Preparedness](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

From SBA.gov

[Tennessee Small Business Development Centers \(TSBDC\)](#)

From TSBDC

[Business Continuity Plan Template](#)

From Ready.Gov

[Business Continuity Toolkit & Master Checklist](#)

From DisasterSafety.org

[CONNEX™ Tennessee](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[Made in Tennessee \(MIT\)](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[Pathway Lending](#)

From Pathway Lending

[UT Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[TSBDC International Trade Center](#)

From TSBDC

[Oak Ridge National Laboratory \(ORNL\) Technology Transfer](#)

From ORNL.gov

[Y-12 Office of Technology Commercialization and Partnerships](#)

From Y12.doe.gov

[UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\) Technology Transfer & Licensing](#)

From UTRF

Pillar:

Transformational Workforce Development

The disruption of the pandemic accelerated many business trends already underway, including automation, online commerce, workforce diversity and even remote work. A quality and skilled workforce is a main driver for economic development and EDOs/Chambers must take a lead role in transformational workforce development strategies to start, expand, retain and recruit businesses to their area.

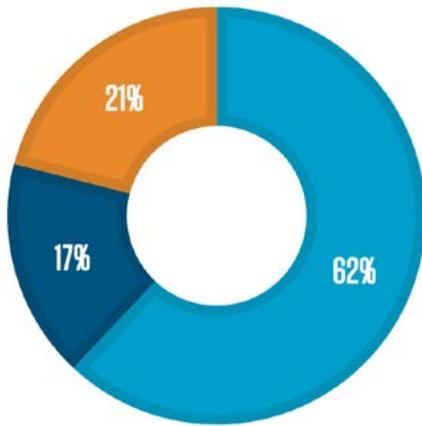


Get ahead of future workforce skills needed by your employers

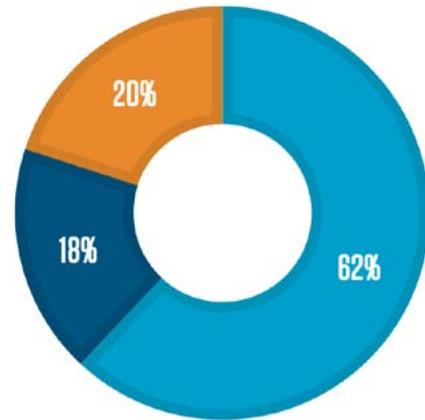
[According to a 2021 Manufacturers Alliance Foundation report](#), less than a quarter of manufacturing leaders are very confident that their workforce has the skills needed for future work.

- **Inventory the current and future skills needed** of your local businesses and identify the skill gaps in the workforce. Share those findings with your community colleges, universities and technical colleges.
- **Develop an understanding of the region's workforce** through the state's [Labor Force Profile](#) and [Labor Force Participation Analysis](#) including neighboring counties.
- **Understand your LaborShed** by utilizing the US Census Bureau [OnTheMap tool](#) or reach out to your regional EDO or state ECD partner for an existing study.
- **Create a key contact list and maintain a good working relationship** with HR Managers/representatives and/or business owners in your area.
- **Join a local or regional** manufacturing roundtable and/or HR Association. Consider creating a CEO Roundtable.
- **Engage with the local area Workforce Development Board**, [VocRehab](#) and regional [American Job Center](#) and facilitate connections to area businesses.
- **Help employers access funding support** for new customized skills training programs. Look to programs like the [TN Incumbent Worker Training Program](#).

2021 Manufacturers Alliance Foundation report



Somewhat Agree
Disagree
Strongly Agree



Our Workforce Has the Skillsets Needed for the Future Agility and Resilience.

Our Company Knows What Skillsets We Need in the Workforce of the Future.



Engage with the education community and connect them to industry

Employers and job training institutions need better connections to educators and schools. [According to a recent RAND report](#), most educators are still using the same strategies they have relied upon for decades to prepare students for work.

- **Network with the education community** including school boards, school principals, higher education institutions and other local officials related to education in your community.
- **Introduce educators into the business community** such as organizing plant tours and lunch and learns to provide educators the insight to better connect the dots between what students learn in the classroom and what is required in the workplace.
- **Learn about the local and regional training providers** and programs at community colleges, universities and technical colleges. Refer and connect local businesses to these resources.
- **Facilitate conversations** (roundtables, forums, individual meetings) between the business and education community regarding needed skills training and gaps.



Identify key barriers to employment and connect workers to resources

Solving some community-wide problems can improve workforce participation. For example, [2.3M women stopped working in 2020](#), due to a lack of access to childcare.

- **Develop diverse community working groups** (including those affected) to

tackle issues such as the lack of quality and affordable childcare, substance abuse, transportation and housing.

- **Create an inventory of available resources** to assist the workforce such as the [Workforce Services Directory](#) developed by the Knoxville Chamber or the [Workforce Services Checklist and Mapping tool](#) from Sumner County.



Assist businesses in developing a workforce pipeline

The next decade will require workforce participation from populations we have overlooked in the past, as well as new workers with skills that are only just now being identified.

- **Understand your community's [labor participation rate](#)** vs. the unemployment rate to identify underutilized workforce segments such as out commuters, retirees and the formerly incarcerated. Explore successful re-entry programs such as the [Gibson County Re-Entry Program](#) or Nashville's [ProjectReturn](#).
- **Explore hidden pipelines of workers** such as underemployed, disabled, trailing spouses, separating military and part-time workers.
- **Start a youth leadership program** in your community and engage them in community conversations and decision making.
- **Engage students in events** such as manufacturing day or career exploration fairs. Start as early as elementary school.
- **Facilitate apprenticeships, internships, job shadowing and work-based learning opportunities** with local businesses such as Chattanooga's [Gestamp Work-Based Learning Program](#).



Take a leadership role in supporting diversity

Incoming generations of workers are more racially, ethnically and culturally diverse than any generation in the past. This is not only changing the dynamics of how businesses recruit and retain workers, but also how businesses are making relocation and expansion decisions. It has become commonplace for site selectors and businesses to include questions on RFIs to assess how a community embraces diversity and inclusion.

- **Host, sponsor or participate in business and workforce programs** presented by organizations representing diversity and inclusion such as [Negocio Prospero](#) (Prosperous Business) training hosted by Nashville's International District to support Spanish entrepreneurs.
- **Consider a website audit** to improve your EDO/Chamber's online presence by including such elements as bi-lingual versions, audio features and chat support. [Usability.gov](#) and the [WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#) provide a variety of resources to assist in this audit.
- **Encourage and embrace community-wide diversity** by hosting or sponsoring ethnic and cultural events or programs in your region.
- **Lead a diversity job fair for employers** to include bi-lingual, remote work, job sharing and flex opportunities.

Section Resources

[Labor Force Profile](#)

From TN Dept. of Labor &
Workforce Development

[Labor Participation Analysis](#)

From TN Dept. of Labor &
Workforce Development

[OnTheMap Tool](#)

U.S. Census Bureau

[American Job Centers](#)

From Department of Labor

[Vocational Rehabilitation - Business Services](#)

From TN.Gov

[TN Incumbent Worker Training Program](#)

From TN Department of Labor and
Workforce Development

[Workforce Services Directory](#)

From Knoxville Chamber

[Workforce Services Checklist and Mapping](#)

From Forward Sumner

[Gestamp Work-based Learning Program](#)

From Gestamp

[ProjectReturn Re-entry Program](#)

From Project Return Inc. - Nashville, TN

[Negocio Prospero \(Prosperous Business\)](#)

From Conexion Americas/Casa
Azafran, Nashville, TN

[Website Audit How To & Tools](#)

From Usability.gov

[WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#)

From Utah State University

[Growing Your Workforce: Strategies to Raise Local Labor Force Participation](#)

From International Economic Development
Council (IEDC)

[Effective Economic Development Roles in Workforce Partnerships](#)

From IEDC

Pillar:

Innovative Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (Retail / Main Street / Startups)

Entrepreneurs and small businesses play a critical role in the local economy. Entrepreneurs tend to stay and grow in their local communities – they contribute to placemaking and they create local wealth and jobs. When a disaster strikes, entrepreneurs and small businesses are seldom as prepared as their larger counterparts.

According to FEMA, one in four small businesses do not reopen following a large-scale disaster. On the flip side, disasters can create a spike in new business starts. Nationwide for example, [the number of new start-ups jumped by 24% during the recent pandemic](#).



Help entrepreneurs and small businesses access disaster recovery capital

Pre-pandemic, [half of America's small businesses had about 27 days of cash](#) on hand; a quarter of them had less than 13 days. During a disaster, accessing capital is critical, but most small businesses don't know where to turn for assistance and programs can be difficult to navigate.

- **Position your organization as a navigator** for small business disaster recovery resources and capital. Designate a point person to collect information on resources at all levels of government. Readily share the information and monitor for updates.
- **Develop relationships with local banks, regional and state partners** such as [TSBDC](#), [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) to accelerate communications and facilitate connections when disaster strikes.
- **Hold financial workshops to educate and provide opportunities** for businesses to network with financial resource providers pre- and post-disaster.
- **Reach out to public and private institutions** such as [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) regarding the development of a disaster bridge loan program.
- **Establish a business recovery fund** controlled locally for short-term assistance until federal or state funds can be secured.
- **Reach out to TNECD [Business Resource Office \(BERO\)](#)** to explore funding through initiatives such as the [TN Pacemakers Entrepreneurship Fund](#).

+ Promote Business Continuity Planning

According to [Ready.Gov](#), 75% of small businesses without a continuity plan fail within 3 years of a major event. But similar to writing business plans, entrepreneurs and small businesses seldom have a continuity plan and those who do struggle to keep them updated.

- **Provide regular workshops and/or resources** on business continuity planning and emergency preparedness for your businesses. Reach out to [TSBDC](#) or [UT CIS](#) for assistance.
- **Explore [Ready.Gov](#) and [DisasterSafety.org](#)** for disaster preparedness and business continuity planning, [toolkits](#) and sample [templates](#).
- **Provide a localized continuity plan template** with key public information completed and updated regularly. Post to your website as a free resource.

According to Ready.Gov, 75% of small businesses without a continuity plan fail within 3 years of a major event.

+ Assist entrepreneurs and small businesses with adopting technology innovation into all aspects of their business

Just like their larger counterparts, [small businesses with strong technology operations are more resilient in times of disaster and recover more quickly to pre-disaster status](#).

- **Help small businesses improve their online operations** by hosting workshops on subjects such as inventory control, HR functions and cybersecurity.
- **Host local workshops and/or create a toolkit** to enhance online presence such as digital marketing, social media and online commerce potential.
- **Connect small businesses** to free online resources such as [Grow with Google OnAir](#) to build their business with the Google suite of digital tools.
- **Assess your community's broadband accessibility**. Work with [TNECD](#) and regional partners to strive for fiber to every business and home.
- **Consider offering free downtown WiFi** to bring visitors downtown to support existing businesses and to encourage more local startups.



Assist Small Businesses and entrepreneurs to establish new streams of revenue

Revenue streams are often disrupted or lost during a disaster. Helping small businesses develop short- and long-term pivot strategies can make the difference between survival or closing.

- **Establish and actively promote** Buy Now / Redeem Later Gift Card Campaigns or Shop Local Programs.
- **For long-term growth, introduce small businesses** to new opportunities such as government contracting. Host a free workshop with the [UT CIS Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#)
- **Explore and connect entrepreneurs to commercialization opportunities** from technology discovered at [ORNL](#), [Y-12](#) or from university research such as [UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\)](#).
- **Hold workshops for brick and mortar only shops** to pivot their business to online commerce. Reach out to your region's [TSBDC](#) and [BERO](#) for assistance.

1 in 4 small businesses do not reopen following a large-scale disaster (FEMA).



Help retail businesses navigate state & local regulations

In the aftermath of a disaster, relaxing or altering regulations and ordinances short-term can make a big difference to those existing businesses getting back on their feet. Individual businesses cannot effectively lobby for changes, but your organization can.

- **Communicate early and often** with small businesses affected by the disaster to learn their pain points. Do this through surveys, town meet-ups or walk arounds.
- **Aggregate the concerns and needs of the small business community** and identify the specific ordinances, rules or regulations that need to be addressed. Be an advocate for the business community and share concerns with local officials.



Build an ecosystem now to support both existing and startup entrepreneurs

Inventory the resources and services of the region and establish a physical hub now to serve entrepreneurs and small business. This will also streamline and accelerate recovery efforts during a disaster.

- **Create a database of resources and capital providers** in the region and make it easily accessible on your website. [BERO's quick link webpage](#) is a great place to start.
- **Consider investing in a physical hub**, like a coworking space, incubator or consistent meetup location. During a disaster, these hubs can be a go-to location to access recovery services and/or provide temporary space for those forced out of their locations. Reach out to [Launch Tennessee](#) and [BERO](#) for assistance.

Section Resources

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

From SBA.Gov

[Tennessee Small Business Development Centers \(TSBDC\)](#)

From TSBDC

[Tennessee Development Districts](#)

From Tennessee Development Districts Association (TDDA)

[Pathway Lending and Pathway Learning](#)

From Pathway Lending

[Business Resource Office \(BERO\)](#)

From TN Dept. of Economic and Community Development (TNECD)

[TN Placemakers Entrepreneurship Fund](#)

From TNECD

[UT CIS Emergency Preparedness](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[Grow with Google OnAir](#)

From Google

[Assess Broadband Accessibility](#)

From FCC.gov

[Tennessee Broadband Resources](#)

From TNECD

[UT Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#) From UT Center for Industrial Services

[Oak Ridge National Laboratory \(ORNL\) Technology Transfer](#)

From ORNL.gov

[Y-12 Office of Technology Commercialization and Partnerships](#)

From Y12.doe.gov

[UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\) Technology Transfer & Licensing](#)

From UTRF

[Small Business Quick Links & Database of Resources](#)

From TNECD

[Launch Tennessee Entrepreneur Resources](#)

From Launch Tennessee

Pillar:

Enhanced Digital Marketing & Recruitment Tools

In order to compete in the global economy, EDOs/Chambers must maintain a strong digital presence for their communities. The pandemic brought to light deficiencies such as limited broadband access and accelerated trends such as virtual site visits, virtual meetings and remote workers. The economic development profession continues to become digitized!



Virtual Recruitment Tools

We live in digital world and virtual meetings and virtual site visits will never go away completely.

- **Virtual Site Visits** - Learn to lead virtual prospect meetings with platforms such as [Zoom](#), [GoToMeeting](#), [Google Meet](#) and [Whereby.com](#). Check technology on both sides and do a test run with your entire team before you host a site visit.
- **Utilize online tutorials** to become more proficient at [delivering online presentations](#).
- **Explore and utilize digital tools** such as Google Earth for [Virtual Interactive Mapping](#), [Google Street View](#) to create 360 images and check out [Google Indoor Maps](#) for [3D images of building interiors](#).
- **Tap into resources** to enhance your virtual presence such as [TVA's conceptual designs](#) for a building on an industrial site, utilize the [TNECD flickr images](#) for your county and apply for [TDTD's Tourism Marketing Grant](#).

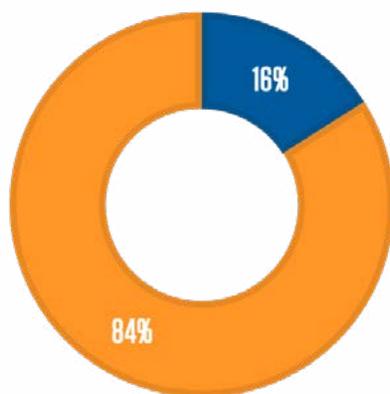


Enhanced Website

Your website is the front door to your community. Site selection is a matter of site elimination. Don't be eliminated because a site selector can't easily find their way through your front door. First impressions do matter!

- **Create a website** with current information and easy to navigate. Make sure to maintain the site and add new content regularly.
- **Test your website on different browsers.** Some websites may operate with no trouble on a certain internet browser and may crash on others.

- **Consider each audience** that might look to you for information and provide relevant and organized content.
- **Clearly display contact information** for your organization in the footer of each page. Make it easy to find email addresses and phone numbers for key staff including the primary economic developer for your community.
- **Avoid using an inquiry form** for economic development or data reports. A site selector or a business looking to relocate will most likely move on to the next community if information is not easily accessible.
- **Provide links to partner websites** such as TVAsites.com, TNECD and regional EDOs that maintain property listings. Keep your property and building listings up to date!
- **Monitor and enhance your [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#)** so that you rank higher in relevant search results. By incorporating relevant keywords throughout your website pages, adding alternative text to images and creating blog posts, you can greatly improve your chances of being seen in an organic search results page. Use [Google Lighthouse](#) to assist with your audit.
- **Access your website on different devices.** The website may look good and operate perfectly on your desktop but may be challenging for mobile users to access. Optimizing your website for users on smartphones and tablets improves their experience and contributes to improved search results rankings.
- **Make your website accessible to everyone.** By doing this, you are ensuring that all of your potential users, including people with disabilities, have a positive user experience and are able to easily access your information. Usability.gov and [WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#) provide a wide variety of tools and information that can help you improve your website's accessibility regardless of your web development skill level.



Proportions of Direct and Discovery searches per Google My Business listing

Direct Searches
Discovery Searches



Identification, Location & Proximity Tools

It is important to know how your organization and your key economic development assets show up in searches.

- [Google Business Profile](#) has become essential and offers a free business profile. This is often the first place customers look. Make sure the information is accurate, complete and up to date.

- **Search the Primary Maps and Mobile Apps** such as **Google Maps, Map Quest and Waze** for your location and check for accuracy.
- **Search key economic development assets** in your community to check for accuracy. See how the maps and mobile apps bring visitors into your community.
- **Set [Google Alerts](#)** for when your organization, city, county etc. are mentioned.
- **What does Wikipedia say?** Check for accuracy about your city and/or county.
- **Complete your Facebook page details.** Your Facebook page should have your location and contact information details readily available in the *About* section of the profile.



Social Media Savvy

Social media is an important way to stay in touch with community members, promote business and industry, celebrate successes and tell your community's unique story.

- **Choose the right [social media platform](#)** for your audience and actively post relevant information. Put your time and energy into creating/sharing great content on the platforms you can effectively manage. Having a strong social media presence on one social media platform is better than having four platforms with no valuable information.
- **Monitor social media and create a strategy** for handling negative comments. Site selectors and businesses looking to relocate do review social media in communities that are being considered.
- **Encourage stakeholders** such as your board and young professionals to post positive happenings in your community. Ask them to tag your accounts in their posts so other users can click through to your profile(s).
- **Consider a podcast** to tell your community's story.
- **Use Facebook or LinkedIn** to promote your businesses and community. Video a business owner and share a success story or unique offering and post to social media and your website.
- **Provide links** to your social media platforms on your website.

The Pew Research Center reports that **72% of Americans use at least one social media site as of February 2021.**

Section Resources

[Virtual Presentation Skills for Leaders Video Tips](#)

From Mimi Bliss

[How To take 360 pictures with Google Street View](#)

From YouTube

[Google Street View](#)

From Google

[Google Maps: Indoor Maps](#)

From Google

[TVA Sites](#)

From TVA

[Google Lighthouse Audit Tool](#)

From Google

[TNECD Available Properties](#)

From TNECD

[The Beginner's Guide to SEO](#)

From Moz

[How To and Tools - Website Accessibility](#)

From Usability.gov

[WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](#)

From Utah State University

[Google Business Profile](#)

From Google

[Google Alerts](#)

From Google

[Social Media Fact Sheet](#)

From Pew Research Center

[10 Social Media Statistics You Need to Know in 2021](#)

From Oberlo

[LinkedIn for Economic Development Organizations \(On-Demand Webinar\)](#)

From LinkedIn

[Facebook Advertising Explained: What Economic Development Marketers Need to Know](#)

From DCI

Disaster Recovery Resources/Partners

+ Tennessee

[Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#)

From TN Chamber

[Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development \(TNECD\)](#)

From TNECD

[Tennessee Department of Health](#)

From TN.GOV

[Tennessee Development Districts](#)

From Tennessee Development District Association (TDDA)

[Tennessee Emergency Management Agency \(TEMA\)](#)

From TN.GOV

[Tennessee Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(TOSHA\)](#)

From TN.GOV - Department of Labor & Workforce Development

[Tennessee Silver Jackets - \(Flood Risk Management Program\)](#)

From Silver Jackets

[Tennessee Small Business Development Centers \(TSBDC\)](#)

From TSBDC

[US Army Corps of Engineers - Tennessee](#)

From US Army Corps of Engineers - Nashville District

[UT Institute of Public Service Agencies \(UT IPS\)](#)

From UT IPS

+ Federal

[Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#)

From ARC

[Delta Regional Authority \(DRA\)](#)

From DRA

[DisasterAssistance.gov](#)

From Website of the Department of Homeland Security

[EDA and Disaster Recovery](#)

From Economic Development Administration (EDA)

[FEMA - Post-Disaster Recovery Planning Resources](#)

From FEMA

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

From OSHA

[Public Health Emergency](#)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - PHE.Gov

[Ready.Gov Website Resources- Toolkits and Checklists](#)

From Ready.Gov

[Tennessee Valley Authority \(TVA\)](#)

From TVA Economic Development

[USDA Rural Development](#)

From U.S. Department of Agriculture

[U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

From HHS.gov

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

From HUD Exchange

[U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#)

From SBA



Other

[American Red Cross](#)

From American Red Cross

[Restore Your Economy \(IEDC\)](#)

From RestoreYourEconomy.Org

[The Salvation Army](#)

From The Salvation Army USA

How UT CIS Can Help

The University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services (UT CIS) delivers technical assistance and training to businesses and communities throughout Tennessee.

Economic Development: We help communities build their capacity to grow jobs and investment.

- The Tennessee Certified Economic Developer (TCED) Program offers comprehensive training in the principles and practices of economic development.
- As a designated EDA University Center, UT CIS connects communities, businesses and organizations to resources across the University of Tennessee system.

Energy Efficiency & Environmental Management: UT CIS helps companies and communities reduce energy costs as well as comply with federal & state environmental standards. This program offers:

- Customized supply chain development programs
- Environmental system training and assistance to industries

Government Contracting: Our Tennessee APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC) provides training and helps businesses successfully compete for government contracts. We can help businesses with:

- Federal, state and local government contracting
- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Programs
- Cybersecurity compliance

Health, Safety & Emergency Preparedness: Our team can help your organization prepare for an emergency and comply with federal and state safety regulations.

- Occupational safety training and inspection
- Business continuity planning and emergency preparedness
- Designated OSHA Training Institute

Manufacturing Excellence: We work with manufacturers to achieve their improvement goals by providing hands-on technical assistance and training.

- UT CIS Solutions Consultants provide customized solutions for industries in your community.
- UT CIS offers solutions for workforce development and leadership training.

Contact Your Local UT CIS Solutions Consultant

Our Solutions Consultants represent Tennessee’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership and all other UT CIS programs by providing a variety of services for small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers and businesses across all 95 counties, from innovation strategies to process improvements to green manufacturing.



1 Bernadette Fuller, 901-378-0885
bernadette.fuller@tennessee.edu

2 Andre Temple, 731-425-4740
andre.temple@tennessee.edu

3 Lee Leonard, 615-532-8657
lee.leonard@tennessee.edu

4 Norma Wilcox, 615-500-7208
norma.wilcox@tennessee.edu

5 Gordon Reed, 423-634-0850
gordon.reed@tennessee.edu

6 George Aslinger, 423-634-0850
george.aslinger@tennessee.edu

7 Harold Booker, 865-805-7236
harold.booker@tennessee.edu

8 Kenny Smith, 423-335-7417
kenny.smith@tennessee.edu

Appendix

Resource templates can be downloaded from the
[UT Center for Industrial Services Website](#)



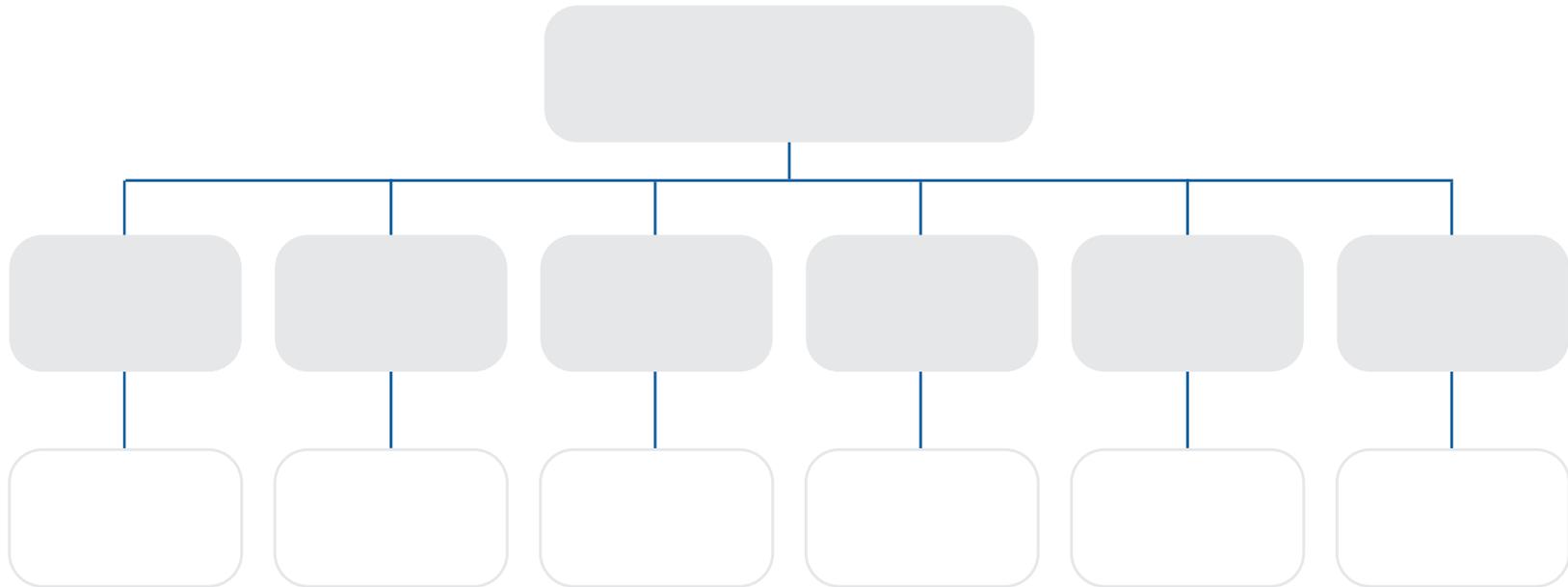
Disaster Call Tree

Provided by



Center for Industrial Services
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

If the Senior Manager is not available, the Manager listed in Row 1 of the second table will be responsible for activating the phone tree. If Manager 1 is not available, responsibility moves to the Manager in Row 2 and so on.



Senior Manager Name	Title	Office Phone	Mobile Number	Other Phone

ID	Manager Name	Department	Office Phone	Mobile Number	Other Phone
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Emergency Response Survey for Businesses

Company Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Leader Interviewer: _____ Organization: _____
Other Interviewer: _____ Organization: _____

Emergency / Disruption:

Date of Event: _____
Cause of Event: _____

Facility

Damage to the facility? None____ Minor____ Significant____ Total Loss____

Facility damage comments: _____

Is the facility open? Yes____ No____

If closed, how long is the estimated closure? _____

Are there any access points blocked to the facility? Yes____ No____

Access comments? _____

Workforce

What portion of employees can work in the facility? All____ Some____ None____

How many jobs are impacted? _____

Impact level to Municipal and related services:

Service Impacted	No Impact	Minor	Significant	No Service	N/A
Electricity					
Gas					
Water					
Sewer					
Trash Removal					
Broadband Internet					
Wireless Internet					
Landline Phone					
Mobile Phone					
Road Transit					
Rail Transit					
Air Transit					
Water Transit					

Other: _____

Have you contacted the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC)? Yes _____ No _____

What additional assistance do you need? _____

Follow up date/plan: _____

Follow Up Questions:

Does your business have an emergency response plan? _____ If yes, did you use it? _____

Does your business have a business disaster preparedness / continuity plan?

Yes _____ No _____

Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment

Provided by



Center for Industrial Services
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

This worksheet will help you determine which hazards to plan for based on probability. Each hazard should be rated by column from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Total all columns for each hazard on the far right. Use the totals to identify the most significant threats facing your organization and prioritize planning efforts.

Potential Hazard	Likelihood of Occurance	Impact on life	Impact on Facility / Property	Impact to Business Operations	Impact on Dependencies	Total
Hurricane						
Fire						
Severe Weather						
Tornadoes						
Hazardous Material Spill						
Transportation Accident						
Earthquake						
Flood						
Nuclear Accident						
Terrorism / Sabotage						
Utility / Power Outage						
Active Shooter						
Civil Disturbance						
Heat Wave						
Public Health Emergency						
Human Error						
IT Disruption						
Mudslide						
Wildfire						
Loss or Illness of Key Staff						

Online Presence Checklist

Website

Website URL _____

Who is responsible for updating the website? _____

Does the website function properly on different browsers? _____

Does the website function properly on different devices (mobile phone, tablet, etc.)? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Days / Hours of Operation
	Special Holiday Hours
	Phone Number
	Social Media Icons
	Location / Address
	Email Address

Google Business

Who is responsible for updating the Business Profile? _____

Who is responsible for monitoring and responding to reviews? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Days / Hours of Operation
	Special Holiday Hours
	Phone Number
	Address in Google Maps
	Photos

Wikipedia

Who is responsible for monitoring the Wikipedia page?

Who is responsible for suggesting edits on the Wikipedia page?

How frequently is the Wikipedia page checked for accuracy? _____

Social Media Presence Checklist

Facebook

Facebook URL or handle _____

Who is responsible for managing your Facebook page? _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages recieved through
Facebook Messenger? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Days / Hours of Operation
	Cover Photo
	Phone Number
	Website URL Listed
	Location / Address

LinkedIn

LinkedIn URL _____

Who is responsible for managing your LinkedIn Business page? _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Overview
	Headquarters & Location
	Phone Number
	Specialties

Twitter

Twitter URL _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Overview
	Location
	Email

Other Social Media Platforms

Other platform: _____ URL: _____

Other platform: _____ URL: _____

Other platform: _____ URL: _____

Who is responsible for managing these pages? _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Overview
	Location
	Email or Phone Number