An Economic Development Authority (EDA) is a public body that promotes diverse economic prosperity in districts with substantial underdevelopment. An EDA creates economic opportunities through the creation and retention of jobs, education of the area workforce, and development of public infrastructure to support area business operations. A Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) may adopt EDA powers to expand its programming.

For counties with a diverse set of economic needs and a desire to take an active hand in development, an EDA provides them with a wide range of authority to invest in their area of operation. Providing essential resources to local workers and employers supports new residents, increasing the tax base and building the local economy.

**FORMATION**

EDA\s are formed via resolution by a county board. First a committee must investigate economic development options for the county. The committee may be between 11 to 15 members, made up of a variety of city, township, housing, and county officials. The committee has 90 days to identify the status of economic development from existing agencies and make a recommendation for the county’s economic development approach. At this point, forming an economic development agency must be the recommended course of action.

**LEADERSHIP**

EDA\s are led by a board of commissioners. There may be as many as 9 board members serving for a period of six years. At least two members must be county commissioners. An executive director typically leads day-to-day operations.

**PROGRAMS**

Business Development

EDA\s offer professional assistance to businesses. EDAs offer education and technical assistance for new businesses to help with licensing, building, and marketing. Services are also offered to businesses looking to expand their operations or who are struggling to retain jobs. Training may be provided to workers to expand the available labor pool within the county.
Infrastructure Development

EDAs may undertake projects that expand public resources. This can include development of industrial parks and business buildings. Other common plans include broadband expansion initiatives and childcare support programs. Marketing efforts to promote attractions, schools, healthcare services, and natural resources are undertaken by an EDA to promote both tourism and migration to the county.

Funding

EDAs offer grants and financing to businesses. This can include expansion, start up, and modernization grants or zero- or low-interest loans. Tax abatement programs and gap financing are also common. If the EDA has adopted HRA powers, the funding can also extend to housing projects. This may require an EDA to staff grants managers and other staff dedicated to managing the charitable arm of the EDA.

Assessing

EDAs to research, comment on, and improve the status of economic development in the county. Exploring the current portfolio of business, the state of industrial infrastructure, and shortage of community services such as internet access, healthcare services, workforce housing, and childcare slots are common findings from an economic needs assessment. The findings are made available to the public and other county agencies. This can inform strategic planning, budgeting, and offer insights to new business owners about opportunities in the county.

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR COUNTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HRA</th>
<th>EDA</th>
<th>FOR-PROFIT/ NON-PROFIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY</td>
<td>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY</td>
<td>Private institutions focused on programming that helps meet the economic goals outlined in their mission statement. Services can be contracted by the county.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A public body that increases the supply of low-income housing through property management, development and implementation of federal housing programs.</td>
<td>A public body that encourages economic development through business support, workforce expansion, funding, and infrastructure investments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PUBLIC

Good option for counties willing to make significant investments, want control of programming, or have a shortage of private participation in development.

PRIVATE

Good option to complement county agencies. Not subject to limitations of public agencies and may charge fees to fund operations.

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