Carl Vinson
Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

GEORGIA CERTIFIED ECONOMIC DEVELOPER PROGRAM

The UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government informs, innovates, and inspires so that governments, large and small, can be more efficient and responsive, address current and emerging challenges, and serve the public with excellence. As an integral part of the University of Georgia's public service and outreach mission, the Institute of Government's faculty, staff, and students work every day to provide the highest quality educational programming, on-the-ground assistance, and innovative tools that equip government leaders, build stronger communities, inspire economic success, and improve quality of life throughout the state of Georgia.

Introduced in 2016, the Georgia Certified Economic Developer (GCED) program is tailored to the requirements of those working for organizations in an economic development capacity. Research conducted by the Institute of Government's faculty experienced in the field of economic development, along with input from subject matter experts provides the essential high-quality training required by economic development professionals to effectively compete in today's global economy. The certification is awarded to economic development professionals upon successful completion of all course requirements and a capstone project.

The Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA) is a non-profit association of professionals and volunteers who are involved with the economic development efforts for Georgia's cities and counties. GEDA was organized to increase the effectiveness of individuals involved in the practice of economic development in Georgia by encouraging cooperation, exchange of information, and upgrading of professional skills. GEDA recognized the need for a Georgia-specific certification program and partnered with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to design and implement the Georgia Certified Economic Developer program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This certification program seeks to improve the effectiveness and performance of economic development professionals by enhancing their knowledge and skills in five competency areas. Each learning session uses facilitative techniques ensuring the active engagement of learners and reflects the realities of economic development in Georgia. Opportunities for learning occur at various times during the year at events and locations throughout the state; it is estimated that coursework and the capstone project can be completed over two to three years.

The program design is grounded in a competency cluster framework that reflects

internationally recognized skills and abilities. The competencies are appropriately broad, representing knowledge of the economic development field, technical abilities, and soft organizational skills. Each course's learning outcomes address at least one competency cluster. The five competency clusters used in this program are:

- **Professionalism and Initiative (PI):** Ability to self-manage, enact accountability, and demonstrate ethical integrity.
- **Technical and Industry Knowledge (TIK)**: Aware of and interested in the economic development industry. Deeply learns sector and service area.
- **Analyzing, Assessing and Problem Solving (AAP)**: Makes effective decisions and solves problems in complex or ambiguous situations by gathering, diagnosing, and judiciously analyzing the information about the situation and environment in order to identify and evaluate options and select the best course of action.
- **Relationship Building (RB)**: Effectively builds relationships with individuals and teams across the organization and external stakeholders by being considerate and responsive to the needs of others; by communicating effectively, by collaborating with others and sharing resources; and by being receptive to feedback.
- **Leadership and Influence (LI)**: Inspires and influences by communicating a compelling vision of the future, conveying an executive presence (e.g., confidence, poise, connecting with others) and being sufficiently agile and self-assured to lead others effectively.

The program consists of **36 hours of core class credits and 24 hours of elective class credits.** Courses range from six to 12 hours in length. The chart below summarizes the course hour requirements that must be fulfilled in order to become eligible for submission of a capstone project and ultimately, receive certification.

PROGRAM COSTS

Total Registration Costs for 60 hours of Coursework	$2,601
Two Day Class	$369
One Day Class	$279

Scholarship opportunities are available through the Georgia Economic Developers Association www.geda.org

COURSE REQUIREMENT SUMMARY

CATEGORY	TRACK	COURSE	REQUIRED HOURS
REQUIRED	CORE	• The Economic Development Landscape • Attracting & Growing Businesses • Workforce Development • Branding & Marketing Strategies • Financing Economic Development and Deal Structuring	12 6 6 6 6
ELECTIVE	INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE ELECTIVES	Examples of classes: (updated every year to reflect GA's changing landscape.) • Agribusiness • Energy & Electric Mobility • Entrepreneur & Small Business • Creative Economies • Global Commerce • Housing Policies & Best Practices • Retail & Downtown Development • Redevelopment/Revitalization Strategies • Tourism	6 hours each
	LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ELECTIVES	Examples of classes: • Role of the Manager • Communications • Powerful Presentations • Managing Conflict • Public Service Values & Ethics • Power & Influence • Strategic Planning • Leading & Navigating Change • Collaborative Leadership • Problem Solving & Decision Making • Principles of Leadership • Motivation/Delegation • Regional Cooperation • Emotional Intelligence • Planning & Land Use	6 hours each
TOTAL PROGRAM REQUIRMENTS	**Program hours as described above plus completion/acceptance of Capstone Project**		**36 core hours + 24 hours elective credit**

COURSE CURRICULUM

Brief descriptions are provided for each of the five required core courses, along with the competency clusters each addresses. Next, the two specialty tracks (Industry Knowledge and Leadership Development) are described. Course titles for the electives associated with each specialty track are listed. It should be noted that every effort is made to keep abreast of Georgia, national, and international economic development emerging trends and issues. For this reason, specialty track course content is fluid, keeping current with ongoing industry and field changes and dynamics.

Required Core Courses

Five core courses are required and participants must earn all 36 core course credit hours to receive certification. In addition, participants must successfully complete 24 hours of elective credit (see below) and submit a passing capstone project. Detailed capstone project information is provided in a subsequent section.

1. **THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE** (PI, TIK)

   Economic development is a central theme for all communities––large, medium, and small, and urban, suburban, and rural. In this core course, economic developers will explore their role in economic development and examine proven strategies, tools and best practices. Participants will learn about the roles of private and nonprofit entities as well as how to identify their community's assets and regional partners. The course will explore the economic development process and key components of an economic development plan and will help economic developers understand how their county fits into a larger economic region. Participants will practice using some basic tools and approaches that they can bring back to help their community develop its own economic development plan.

2. **ATTRACTING & GROWING BUSINESSES** (AAP, RB, LI)

   In the economic development profession the ability to attract new companies as well as retain and grow jobs among existing companies has always been cited as fundamentals of success. This course will examine best practices for successful attraction and recruitment of new companies, current industry sector trends, and emerging industries. This course will address best practices for collecting key information regarding both challenges and opportunities for existing industries; tools to leverage in working with both retention and expansion situations; and metrics for evaluating success and communicating results with key stakeholders. The course will present data regarding the significance of business retention and expansion efforts and will utilize case study and incentives analysis to ensure that the course is relevant to the Georgia practitioner.

3. **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (TIK, RB)

   Recognizing the role of the economic developer in workforce development is critical. This course will help the economic development professional understand the importance of workforce development and how it directly impacts their role as well as every aspect of their community. During this course, professionals will start a plan to analyze the current and future workforce data for their community. Additionally, they

will begin to identify stakeholders and resources for their workforce development plan and understand how to package their workforce development assets.

4. **BRANDING & MARKETING STRATEGIES** (PI, TIK, RB, LI)

   Branding and marketing are key, critical elements in economic development that set communities apart. As economic developers and communities compete in a global marketplace, it is critical that they have a distinctive brand message and identity, utilize strategic, multi-channel marketing approaches, and engage effective tools and techniques to get results and return on investment.

5. **FINANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DEAL STRUCTURING** (PI, TIK, AAP, RB)

   Successful economic development professionals understand how financial packages are structured and the importance of financing options in attracting and retaining companies. By assisting in securing funding and other incentives from a variety of state and local sources, as well as federal programs, professionals can help bridge the gap between a company's private funding sources and the requirements that need to be met in order to locate or expand. This course is designed to provide those involved or interested in economic development an understanding of various financing and incentive programs available, how to access them, and how pull multiple programs together in order to close the deal.

Elective Specialty Courses

Elective courses are offered in two specialty tracks, **Industry Knowledge** and **Leadership Development**. For successful completion of the certification requirements, participants must complete 24 hours of elective credit. Certification is awarded to those who meet the minimum requirements, earn elective credit in both tracks, and complete the capstone project.

A. **Industry Knowledge Specialty Track** (TIK, AAP, PI, RB, LI): This specialization provides the economic development professional the opportunity to deepen and expand their industry knowledge across multiple sectors. The knowledge gained from these Georgia-specific courses in sector awareness will further business recruitment and retention efforts by strengthening asset-mapping, strategic planning, and analytic and decision-making capabilities. Completion of this certification will also reinforce the roles and responsibilities of the professional economic development official in local government settings. This specialization will address each of five competency clusters to varying degrees.

   In 6-hour sessions, Industry Knowledge Specialty Track courses will be offered on the following topics: Agribusiness, Energy & Electric Mobility, Entrepreneur & Small Business, Creative Economies, Global Commerce, Housing Policies & Best Practices, Retail & Downtwon Development, Redevelopment & Revitalization Strategies, Tourism.

   Note: These electives will be held in locations throughout Georgia to provide a first-hand look at best practices in these topic areas.

B. Leadership Development Specialty Track (LI, RB, AAP): This specialization is

intended for those professionals with supervisory or managerial responsibility as well as those who aspire to such positions. Further, the knowledge and skills gained will enhance any economic development professional's effectiveness because their working environment is at the nexus of the public and private spheres which at times may be challenging to negotiate. While technical, field, and industry awareness and skills are critical, the ability to achieve desired business and performance results relies on the professional's ability to appropriately activate soft skills in the local government context. The track strongly addresses the majority of the competency clusters and enhances performance in the other competencies. The Leadership Development Specialty Track courses, offered in 6-hour sessions, are organized using the three broad areas below. Participants may select any of those courses they deem useful, regardless of area.

Leading in the Public Sector: This content area provides an understanding of public service leadership in the contexts of Georgia and the local government. The professional's leadership is linked to self-awareness; therefore, personal style and personality preferences are also addressed in this area.

- Role of the Manager
- Public Service Values & Ethics
- Principles of Leadership
- Motivation/Delegation
- Emotional Intelligence

Building Relationships & Teams: This content area focuses on the theories and practice of group development and dynamics, and the impact of different personality styles and needs on group behavior. The power of differences and their contribution to productive collaboration and effective problem-solving are revealed.

- Communications
- Managing Conflict
- Collaborative Leadership
- Problem Solving & Decision Making
- Regional Cooperation

Making a Difference: Public sector knowledge and team building skills are tools needed to make a difference but without the capacity to negotiate and navigate change and power or to be persuasive, the best plans and efforts are in jeopardy. This content area offers knowledge, skills, and best practices that allow the economic development professional to widen and add depth to their sphere of influence and facilitate meaningful contributions to their community's economic development efforts.

- Power & Influence
- Leading & Navigating Change

- Powerful Presentations
- Strategic Planning
- Planning & Land Use

CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

Participants in the Georgia Certified Economic Developer (GCED) program are required to maintain, complete, and submit a capstone project in order to be eligible for program graduation. Participants have the option of a capstone portfolio project or a project that addresses a community and economic development challenge or opportunity related to their community, region, or organization.

The capstone project must be submitted to the GCED Program Manager within three (3) months of the date of completion of core and elective credits. For complete information on the capstone projects and checklist, contact Jennifer Nelson, GCED Program Manager.

Awarding the Certification

Once the participant receives the pass designation for their capstone project, the participant is awarded GCED certification. Certifications are awarded twice annually at the Georgia Economic Developers Association's Spring Workshop and Annual Conference.

Contact Information:
Jennifer R. Nelson, Public Service Faculty & GCED Program Manager
UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government
jrnelson@uga.edu
(706) 201-6095

Competency Sources:
Carl Vinson Institute of Government's GOV360®, a 360 degree leadership assessment tool and a personality preference indicator will be administered and processed

International Economic Development Council:
http://www.iedcevents.org/Downloads/Conferences/Leadership_12/Bean.pdf
https://butlercountyidb.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/iedc_ed_competencies.pdf

American Planning Association: https://www.planning.org/aicp/commoncore/