MEDA MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION

Economic Development Basic Course
September 8 – 10, 2026
The View at Jackson Field
Lansing, MI

Corporate Sponsors

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__Tuesday, September 8__

7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. **Registration**

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Small Business & Entrepreneurship Development**
This session will provide an overview of the role of small businesses in the U.S. economy, the creation of jobs, a brief profile of the small business creation process, and an introduction to the new and emerging areas of small business creation.
Vicky Rowinski, *CEcD, Director, Department of Planning and Economic Development, Macomb County*

10:00 a.m.– 10:15 a.m. **Break**

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Strategic Planning**
Strategic planning for a community or organization envisions its future and develops necessary procedures and actions to achieve that future. This session will focus on the background understanding of strategic planning and its process, how to design and organize the process, develop strategies, and formulate action plans.
Keith A. Gillenwater*, CEcD, MEDP, MPA, President and CEO, Accelerate Jackson County, Inc.*

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. **Lunch**

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **Developing a Healthy Relationship with Your Legislators**
Jeff Mayes*, Executive Director, Sales and Marketing, Consumers Energy*

2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Break**

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. **Real Estate Development and Reuse**
In this session, participants will be introduced to the land development process, with an emphasis on the role that the economic developer plays. Participants will learn about the various tools that are available at the local

level, including tax increment financing, bonds, land assembly, and eminent domain, in addition to the many federal programs available.
Samantha Mariuz*, Economic Development Manager, Fleis & Vandenbrink*

Wednesday, September 9

7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Registration

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Community/Neighborhood Development
This session will provide an understanding of the steps in the community development process, and the challenges of community development in economic development practice.
Khalfani Stephens*, MBA, CEcD, EDFP, Adjunct Professor, University of Michigan Flint*

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Economic Development Ethics
Incorporating ethics into professional standards is critical to the ongoing growth of the economic development profession. Ethical standards ensure accountability, transparency, and integrity. Learn what your economic development organization should include in its ethics policies and practices.
Samantha Fountain*, CEcD, Community and Economic Development Director, Building, Planning, & Zoning Department, City of Lapeer*

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Lunch

1:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Marketing & Attraction
As an economic developer, it is important that you have a basic knowledge of the marketing process and its benefits. This session will focus on the marketing process, geographic and economic considerations, suspects vs. prospects, and advertising and promotion. Also addressed will be market research and targeting.
Maureen Donohue Krauss

3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Break

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Managing an Economic Development Organization
This session will cover the issues specific to economic development organizations such as working with leaders, developing a vision for the organization and community, the delegation of available resources to the right programs, and the development of the most appropriate programs for that organization and its community.
Justin Horvath*, CEcD, President and CEO, Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership*
Brent Jones*, Vice President, Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership*

Thursday, September 10

7:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. Registration

7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Workforce Development

Workforce development has become a major focus for economic development organizations. A skilled and educated workforce is crucial in today's economy. This interactive session will focus on the need for the creation of workforce development programs that address both community and business needs.
***Zachary Morris**, EDFP, AVP Business Development, Sturgis Bank*

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Break

9:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Economic Development Finance
This session will focus on several key elements, including the blending of sources, capital availability, sources of long-term financing, returns to the lender and leveraging. Once we have a better understanding of the structure, we will then look at the two sectors of financing: public and private.
***Jason Kester**, EDFP, Regional Director, Agracel, Inc.*

11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Business Retention & Expansion
Business retention and expansion are critical in today's economy. The objectives of this session will include how to organize a business retention and expansion program. We will cover how to, provide examples of programs and activities that foster the growth of existing businesses, recommend strategies helpful in implementing a successful program, and identify valuable local resources.
***Kati Mora**, President and CEO, Middle Michigan Development Corporation*