

## Program Overview

Fond du Lac County Economic Development Corporation (FCEDC) and Center for Enterprise Development (CED) received a \$437,899 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). The grant is being utilized to fund the implementation and three years of services that will expand and enhance FCEDC's current existing business development services in the form of an economic gardening program called "Impact!".

### What is economic gardening?

In a nutshell, the term economic gardening means growing the economy from within. It is a model based on the idea that entrepreneurs at all levels of a business life-cycle drive economies. The program creates jobs by supporting existing companies in a community. Economic gardening works by providing access to technology for finding or expanding sales opportunities, creating supply chain efficiencies, and understanding competition.

### What will the Impact! program do exactly?

Impact! builds upon existing business development services already provided by FCEDC. The program supplies businesses with timely, relevant, and actionable information about their competitors and markets. Information will be mined from high-powered databases, geographic information systems, trade association, and government web sites to glean useful information to increase client competitiveness. The company will be provided with a report that summarizes and analyzes this information. Staff will continue to be at the side of our clients, in a consultative role, as the businesses implement growth strategies highlighted by the analysis provided to them via the Impact! program.

### What type of specific information will be provided to businesses as part of the Impact! program?

Information provided to companies can include detailed reports and services centering on competitors and their strategies; industry trends and forecasts; market size and sales; market demographics; market research reports; potential market niches; prospective partners and resources; and marketing lists and leads.

### Other than services to individual businesses, how will the Impact! program positively affect the overall economic health of Fond du Lac County?

During the first three years, an estimated 500 jobs will be created and \$16 million in private investment leveraged as a result of the Impact! program. In addition, the research tools available through the Impact! program will be used to develop more thorough databases. The data collected will then be used to better understand the local business environment and identify areas of concern as well as supply chain and markets available to local businesses.

### Will any existing FCEDC services or programs complement the new Impact! program?

Absolutely! As already mentioned, FCEDC provides extensive existing business development services to our clients in Fond du Lac County. The Impact! program will simply provide another powerful tool in the FCEDC toolbox of existing business services. FCEDC is also a partner with several neighboring counties in the Northeast Wisconsin International Business Development Program which provides a broad and comprehensive range of programs, services, and information that enable businesses to enhance their position in the global marketplace. The international program will be heavily used in the Impact! program to assist clients in expanding markets and supply options. Additionally, aggregate information obtained through FCEDC's Full Circle program visits can be integrated into big-picture analysis of business climate and challenges in Fond du Lac County.