

Anaheim Economic Development Team Fosters a Thriving Business Community

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Everybody has a unique story for getting into this field. Why did you get involved in economic development?

My interest in economic development is rooted in my desire to elevate communities through empowering its residents to pursue entrepreneurship, have access to quality jobs and economic growth opportunities. My parents are entrepreneurs that found joy in creating employment and wealth opportunities for many families. Early on, I adopted and embraced this same mindset and commitment to empower and uplift not just my household but also the community around me. Throughout my career, I have been committed to a collaborative team approach where I could effectively align various resources and work hand-in-hand with those sharing this passion for economic growth.

In your economic development work experience, can you think of a specific economic development project of program that you worked on that stood out as making an impact? Can you tell me a little bit about it and when it started?

In August 2017, I developed the Anaheim Economic Development Team. The team is comprised of staff representatives from Economic Development, Planning and Building, Workforce Development, and Anaheim Public Utilities. This team approach brings together the expertise and knowledge of various disciplines with which businesses regularly



interact to provide direct, tangible, and prompt assistance to over 20,000 businesses and 350,000 residents located within the city of Anaheim. Our team is a dedicated one-stop business resource with the shared commitment to eliminate barriers to doing business and successfully equipping businesses with the tools to succeed.

The Anaheim Economic Development Team meets with aspiring entrepreneurs and companies and their project team during their respective phases of their move or expansion to Anaheim and provides businesses with a one-stop business resource. Through these personalized meetings, the team discusses streamlined development processes, identifies time and cost savings, shares City resources, financial rebates and incentives, marketing programs, and works

collaboratively to meet the company's timeline. Ultimately, the Anaheim Economic Developing Team is empowering aspiring entrepreneurs and equipping our business community with the tools for economic growth.

A lot of projects/programs have ups and downs. Were there challenges you had to overcome to be successful and rewards working on this project/program?

One of the initial challenges the team faced in cementing ourselves as a cohesive unit, was ensuring that each team member could gain an understanding of the work and challenges each Department or discipline faced. This understanding and appreciation for the demands and knowledge base of each team member has strengthened us as a team and has been very rewarding.

We are now cognizant of realistic timeframes, ways we can complement each other's areas of expertise, and how to effectively align our collective resources to assist our business community. Team members can now speak confidently about the collective services offered, are prudent in knowing where a team member's expertise should be sought, and all strive toward the same goal of being facilitators and not regulators. As a cohesive unit, we meet with various industries, make presentations at national tradeshow and conventions, and have created entrepreneurship programs that are growing our business base.

Can you share any impacts the project/program has had or will have on employment, expansion of local tax base & diversification of the area's economy?

The creation of the Anaheim Economic Development Team has had a significant impact on the local economy with tangible results in business attraction and expansion and job creation and retention. Since its formation in August 2017, the team has assisted nearly 100 businesses with locating expansion sites, streamlined the permit and plan check process for more than 800 businesses, connected 915 job seekers with job training and employment opportunities at Anaheim companies, and provided \$1.5 million in commercial utility rebates and incentives. These achievements are a result of the internal collaboration of City staff as well as the direct partnership with various stakeholders.

The team proactively collaborates with resource agencies, companies, brokers, property managers, and developers on business retention and expansion efforts and invites their feedback to help shape programs and create pathways for continued economic growth. The Economic Development Team has effectively strengthened partnerships with the business community, facilitated business expansion, and reinforced Anaheim's business-friendly climate.

What advice would you give to other economic development professionals when working on a similar project/program?

My advice to my economic development colleagues is that successful economic development should always be collaborative and strategic. Only through collaborating with internal and external partners, can we strategically align resources for economic growth and be a true partner to our business communities.

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