

To: EDC members
From: Lamar Cotten, Staff
Date: 6.30.2016

RE: Status update for Business Retention and Expansion Program (BRE)

Summarized below is an update on BRE matters.

1. Background/Recap. BRE is a state funded program operated at the local level to collect and analyze local business data. Such data is derived from in-person interviews possibly followed up by direct technical assistance and suggested approaches to outside funding assistance (loans and grants) and other relevant program tools.
2. Business Interview Process. Attached is the suggested state survey. Survey results are confidential information and will not be shared with the public. Hired interviewers are required to take a 1-2 day class (in Valdez). The cost of the class would be covered by UA Center for Economic Development (UACED). The city may have to cover some travel and R/B cost for the instructor. Payment for the interviewers would be covered by the city as, presumably, contract employees on an hourly basis. Upon training completion, they would commence interviews of local businesses.
3. Program Staff. Interviewers' work is supervised by a program staff person who would work directly with participating businesses and at least initially funded by the COV. The person could be most likely a .5-1 FTE staff to either (1) COV, (2) PWC (3) VVCB or (4) a future local business association. Realistically, such a position would initially require COV funding. Ideally, such a person would be a local resident with a business background.
4. Role of Prince William Sound College. Dan O'Connor and I have had a series of good conversations about a possible role for PWSC in the program. With the initial training cost covered by UACED, PWSC role would at this stage appear to only be very limited or non-existent. Dan and I have agreed to continue to converse on the matter. Unfortunately, he will be out of town for our June 6th meeting. He will attempt to have staff or a board member in attendance.
5. Recommendations. (A) As an initial step, (1) Develop and submit a budget to the city council for instructor travel cost and a one year .5-1 FTE staff position. Upon council approval, (2) train interviewers (3) commence interviews of business owners. (B) At the same time, make a determination of what organization could and would provide this service.