Association of Public & Land-grant Universities

UTSA



CECE | INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AWARDS PROGRAM

2024 CASE STUDY

IEP CATEGORY - PLACE

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Valdez Institute for Economic Development

UTSA's VALDEZ INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UTSA's Valdez Institute for Economic Development (IED) brings together ten public service centers focused on strengthening the San Antonio and south-central Texas economy, generating $2.6B in economic impact in 2023. The Institute for Economic Development is a unique university-based enterprise that trains, advises, mentors, and assists entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses with its focus on a 79-county service region that abuts the entirety of the Texas-Mexico border, serving some 7 million Texans in an underserved and underinvested predominantly Hispanic population.



University of Texas at San Antonio Regional Small Business Development Center client and small business owner, Mario Lerma, East Side Choice Meats

The VIED is closely tied to the university's academic and research assets to provide connectivity between students seeking experiential learning opportunities and small businesses, as well as to channel applied research knowledge to communities seeking to redevelop infrastructure, establish innovation districts, improve the security of supply chains and other attributes essential to their economic prosperity.

The VIED also serves as a statewide driver of technology commercialization, working with university —and community-based innovators and entrepreneurs on their journeys to launching companies based on their research. UTSA's institute is also the sole agent of the US Government in transferring the US small business development methodology to international partners, currently working with 25 partners in the Western Hemisphere and Africa.

This one-stop public service institute for business creation and economic growth brings to bear the full spectrum of talent and capacity development programming, along with innovation production and entrepreneurship advising, that focuses heavily on historically underserved populations and businesses. Based at a Hispanic Serving, R1, Carnegie Community Engaged university, the VIED is a trusted ecosystem partner and an important entry point to UTSA for community members who otherwise would not turn to a public university for assistance on their personal company journeys.

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While it is not uncommon for a public university to be home to a Small Business Development Center (SBDC), UTSA's Institute for Economic Development is much more than that. It brings under one roof a synergistic mix of 13 economic development service centers, including the SBDC Network hub that connects to another 10 regional SBDCs, a Global Development Center, a Technology Commercialization Center, the National SBDC Information Clearinghouse, the Minority Business Development Agency Business Center and its four regional programs, the APEX Accelerator, the Trade and Adjustment Assistance Center, and a University Center. The 2023 public service results and economic impact of the UTSA VIED are illustrated here:

VIED Public Service Results

- Businesses served - 41,231
- Training events and courses - 1,551
- Training participants - 29,665
- Consulting cases - 7,811
- Business research tasks - 3, 755

VIED Economic Impact

- Jobs created - 4,042
- Jobs retained - 7,934
- New business starts - 545
- Business expansions - 914
- New tax revenue generated - $39,650,000
- New financing and investments - $243,304,214
- New sales, contracts and exports - $2,345,493,056

Office of Commercialization and Innovation

Another unique aspect of the IED is that it is conjoined with the UTSA Office of Commercialization and Innovation, which focuses on connecting the university knowledge enterprise with companies and communities to solve problems and increase economic output through university-discovered inventions. Both the Office of Commercialization and Innovation and the Institute of Economic Development fall under the leadership of one associate vice president for innovation and economic development, increasing the sharing of resources and expertise provided to researchers, inventors, entrepreneurs, and technology users on and off campus. UTSA takes an intentional and synergistic

approach to service internal and external ideators that can become companies or parts of companies that will provide opportunities for its graduates, keeping talent local and growing the regional economy.

UTSA Procurement Service Center

A highlight of the Institute of Economic Development is the UTSA Procurement Service Center which ambitiously undertakes the challenge to streamline the processes for and build capacity in historically underutilized businesses (HUB) to be more competitive in the local $8.3 billion public procurement economy. This program serves all 14 public procurement entities in the San Antonio metro area, including the public universities, city, county, utilities, housing, hospitals, redeveloped former military bases, and others.

Place-based Outreach

UTSA's Institute of Economic Development works with the city and county economic development offices, as well as with the three sub-regional organizations that focus on the city's most underdeveloped neighborhoods. The institute continues to provide direct support to early-stage small businesses and startups, meeting them where they are. In the predominantly Hispanic west side of the urban core, IED offices partnered with other UTSA efforts to bridge the digital divide and increase computer literacy while offering online training, improving business skills, and preparing for access to capital. This place-based outreach emanates from the university's West Side community center located in the heart of the historic neighborhood.

Partnerships and Technical Training

The Institute of Economic Development provides technical training for companies to keep up with and comply with cybersecurity needs and requirements. This critical dimension of running a business or being ready to provide goods and services as part of large contracts helps inform and protect small business owners, as well as prepares contractors with the knowledge and certification necessary to win more business. UTSA is a leader in cybersecurity research and business application, home to a US Department of Energy manufacturing institute, Cybersecurity Manufacturing Innovation Institute, that partners with the IED to bring the full spectrum of applied research and capacity development into the community.

University Center Program

The Institute of Economic Development's University Center program connects with councils of government (COG) that represent county-based economic development organizations across the service region. These COGs provide grassroots data and information that highlight the needs and opportunities for increasing equitable economic prosperity in part of Texas where rural and urban divides are sharply pronounced. The IED-COG relationship has produced detailed analyses and recommendations for communities poised to reboot their economies through investment and stepped-up use of technologies in areas like supply chain development, a critical part of the south Texas economy that sits in the throughway of cross-border and maritime commerce, including the busiest land port in the nation at Laredo.

Throughout its forty-plus year history of serving San Antonio and south Texas, the IED stimulated billions of dollars in economic activity, touched hundreds of thousands of lives, and grew the economy – one business, one startup, and one entrepreneur at a time.

LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION

Supporting Information:

- University of Texas at San Antonio Valdez Institute for Economic Development
- University of Texas at San Antonio Valdez Institute for Economic Development Annual Report 2023

ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

ABOUT THE IEP PROGRAM

APLU and its Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP Program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP Awards Program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- Talent and workforce development
- Innovation, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- Place development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: www.APLU.org/IEP